DOCTRINE OF THE PRIESTHOOD

Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven. (D&C 121:45)

DECEMBER 1990 SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH VOL. 7 NO. 12

THE TRIAL OF SIDNEY RIGDON
FIRST COUNSELOR
TO THE
PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH

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Introduction

Today, after nearly a hundred and fifty years of development and practice, the mechanisms and questions of succession in the Priesthood have been worked out and policies established. However, as of June 27th, 1844, when the Prophet Joseph Smith was unexpectedly murdered, there was no such smooth transition. The Prophet did in fact leave instructions on succession regarding his brothers Hyrum and Samuel, and his sons, but as it turned out, Hyrum died before the Prophet, and Samuel died only a few weeks after, and his sons were too young — indeed, one of them was not yet even born. This left the Church without a head, and no policy established through experience or practice by which one might be appointed. In this vacuum, several opportunists arose and tried their hand, including James J. Strang and John C. Bennett.

As of this time, there had been no direction or policy established regarding the dissolving of the First Presidency at the death of the President. Nor had the Prophet given any direction regarding the ascendency of the quorum of the Twelve to the Presidency of the Church in the event of his death. Consequently, President Rigdon (who at the time was in good standing) endeavored to have himself established as a guardian to the Church, until the Prophet's children became of age. When this failed, he began to strive for a division among the Saints, in hopes that some of his friends would except him as their leader and leave the main body of the Church. In doing this Rigdon implemented the principle of Adoption and Kingdom building, as it had been taught by the Prophet in the Council of Fifty. Of necessity, this involved the creation of Rigdon's own private Holy Order and the ordination of his disciples as Kings and Priests. More than anything else, it was this last action that brought on Rigdon's trial and excommunication, for he had violated the

law of union, which was the prime objective of the Holy Order. It was for this reason that the Holy Order, Kings and Priests and the Fulness of the Priesthood, together with their natural connection to the question of succession, became the principle focus of Rigdon's trial. And it is for this very reason that the Rigdon trial is so important, for it is the most comprehensive document pertaining to the Fulness of the Priesthood, which survived the Nauvoo period. Hence its publication here — that the reader might be made acquainted on a first hand basis with the Priesthood developments which took place in the Holy Order and Council of Fifty; and that the real issues of the succession crisis of 1844 might be understood in their whole context.

Preface

On September 8th, 1844, William Clayton wrote the following in his Journal:

Sunday 8. At the meeting all day and acted as clerk.* E[lde]r Rigdon, Samuel Bennett, Leonard Soby, George Morey, Joseph H. Newton and John A. Forgens were cut off from the church & Samuel James and Jared Carter disfellowshipped. There was a good feeling among the people and bad feeling among the Rigdonites.

It is evident from this as well as from diary entries that follow that Clayton reported the Rigdon Trial — and not only Clayton, but in all probability Thomas Bullock also reported it, for the published account in the *Times & Seasons* appears to be verbatim, which was beyond the reporting capabilities of any of these men. Clayton's diary states that he worked on the trial minutes for several days afterwards in order to get them ready for publication:

[**9th, 10th, 12th]** P.M. at Phelp's office comparing minutes.

Friday 13. [Clayton continued to work on the minutes of Rigdon's Excommunication trial.]. . . At 3 went to see Alice Hardman who is sick and was united in the E[verlasting] C[ovenant]. (William Clayton Diary, to be published in future issue of *Doctrine of the Priesthood*)

Probably Clayton amalgamated all the reports into one account. In any case, the final draft or the first half which still exists, is written in Clayton's handwriting. In comparing this manuscript to the text of the trial as it was finally published in the *Times and Seasons*, aside from a few minor omissions and a couple of missing lines, they are identical. These omissions and lines have been added back into the text, and except for these and most of the emphasis in bold and italics, together with some minor punctuation, the trial as printed in this publication is identical to that which was published in the Times and Seasons. In places where punctuation was added in controversial material, the punctuation which was added in placed in brackets.

As of the time of Rigdon's trial, George D. Watt was the only man in the Church who was capable of reporting a speech verbatim, but for some reason, though he arrived in Nauvoo in late 1842, he never began to report for the Church until the April conference in 1845. He also reported the trials for those who murdered the Prophet and his brother Hyrum. It was necessary to smuggle his report out of the trial, page by page, to protect it from the mob, otherwise there would be no record of the trial proceedings.

Pitman Shorthand, which was a phonetic system that did not use the alphabet was invented in England in the late 1830s. Sir Isaac Pitman, who invented it, taught his system by correspondence in the mail, and Willard Richards, who was on a mission in England, advised Watt to learn this system before he immigrated to the United States. In accordance with Pitman's autobiography, it appears that George D. Watt was the first man to bring this skill to America.

Because of the extensive information on succession which is contained in Rigdon's trial, and the many references to Kings & Priests, the Holy Order and the Council of Fifty, the whole of Clayton's final draft is reproduced in the following pages.

The Trial of Sidney Rigdon
First Counselor
to the
Prophet Joseph Smith

Edited
by
Fred C. Collier

Minutes of a meeting of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, held on the meeting ground in the city of Nauvoo, on Sunday, September 8th, 1844.

Present, of the Quorum of the Twelve, President Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Parley P. Pratt, Orson Pratt, Orson Hyde, George A. Smith, John Taylor and Amasa Lyman.

The High Council organized themselves with Bishop Newel K. Whitney at their head, as follows: William Marks, President of the Stake, and Charles C. Rich, Councillor; Samuel Bent, James Allred, Lewis D. Wilson, Alpheus Cutler, David Fullmer, George W. Harris, Thomas Grover, Aaron Johnson, Henry G. Sherwood, also Reynolds Cahoon, Asael Smith and Ezra T. Benson, in the place of three absent members. At 10 minutes after 10 o'clock, President Young requested the choir to sing a hymn, which was done; and the services opened by prayer from Elder Orson Hyde, after which the choir sung another hymn.

President Young then arose and addressed the people in substance as follows:

I will call the attention of the congregation to the subject which is designed to be laid before you today. But I will first make a request that the police will attend to the instructions given them by the Mayor this morning, and that is, to see that there is perfect order on the outside of the congregation. We are not afraid of disturbance here, but there is generally some disposed to talk on the outside, which prevents those from hearing who are near them, and we wish all to hear what is said from the stand.

I have frequently thought lately of Paul's words when he said "much every way," (Rom. 3:2) "some for Paul, some for Apollos, some for Cephas and some for Christ"[1] (1 Cor. 1:12) and I believe there are a great many here for Christ. I will make the application of Paul's words to us: "Much every way," Some for Joseph and Hyrum, the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants, the Temple and Joseph's measures;[2] and some for Lyman Wight, some for James Emmett[3] and some for Sidney Rigdon, and I suppose some for the Twelve.

The business of the day will result in this thing: all those who are for Joseph and Hyrum, the Book of Mormon, book of Doctrine and Covenants, the Temple and Joseph's measures, and for the Twelve; they being one party; will be called upon to manifest their principles openly and boldly. Then we wish all who are of the opposite parties to enjoy the same liberty, and to be as decided and bold, and to show their principles as boldly, and be as decided as they are in

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[1] In all probability this New Testament passage was directed at the clanish spirit which is sometimes created through the Law of Adoption. For more on this see, "Adoption, Law of the Kingdom, Forgotten Doctrine of Mormonism", *Doctrine of the Priesthood*, Vol. 8, No. 4, (April 1991) pp. 13 # 38, also pp. 74–78.

[2] See notes 5, 19, 23. The "measures of Joseph" and those who were for and against them became the principle focus of Rigdon's trial — in other words, the Temple and the laws and ordinances and organizations associated therewith, which included the Holy Order, Council of Fifty, and Plural-Celestial marriage — together with the ordaining of Kings and Priests in the context of a perfect union and Celestial Theocracy.

[3] See note 4.

their secret meetings and private councils. If they are for Sidney Rigdon; and believe he is the man to be the First President and the leader of this people, we wish them to manifest it as freely as they do in other places; because this will form another party.

We want all those who are for Lyman Wight and his measures,[4] to show themselves openly and boldly; and all those for James Emmett and his measures, to show themselves. We wish them to withdraw to day without fear and to be as bold here as they are in other places. They may as well show themselves boldly, for I know where they live, and I know their names: I can point them out if necessary. Those who wish to tarry and build up the city and build the Temple, and carry out the measures and revelations of our martyred Prophet,[5] we wish to know who they are. Now all those who decline going either way, but secretly slander the character of Joseph Smith and the Twelve, my fellowship will be withdrawn from them without any further ceremony. If there are not more than ten men who hang on to the truth, and to Joseph and the Temple, and are willing to do right in all things, let me be one of that number. If there should be but ten left, and their lives should be threatened; threatened with destruction by mobs, the Temple not be built, & etc., because they are determined to do right, let me be one that is martyred for the truth. I have travelled these many years in the midst of poverty and tribulation, and that too with blood in my shoes, month after month, to sustain and to preach this gospel and build

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[4] Lyman Wight and James Emmett were both members of the Council of Fifty during the Prophet's life time, and wanted to gather around them a Family Kingdom by the Law of Adoption and leave the city. Through a directive which was given by the Prophet Joseph Smith while in council with the Fifty Princes of the Kingdom, Wight had been commissioned to establish a kingdom in Texas and notwithstanding the Prophet's death, Wight still wanted to follow through with his calling. Hence, the problem with Wight and Emmett was not so much that they were against Joseph's measures, but that they were out of step with President Young. For more on this, see "Adoption, Law of the Kingdom, Forgotten Doctrine of Mormonism", *Doctrine of the Priesthood*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (April 1991) pp. 16–25; see also "The Diaries and Writings of Bishop George Miller", footnotes 32–42, to be published in a forthcoming issue of *Doctrine of the Priesthood*.

[5] See note 2.

up this Kingdom; and God forbid that I should now turn round and seek to destroy that which I have been laboring to build up.

It is written in the book of Doctrine and Covenants, that the President can be tried before a Bishop and twelve High Priests, or the High Council of the Church (D & C 107:72–84). There are many present this morning who were present at the organization of that quorum in Kirtland (D & C 102). We have here before us this morning, the High Council, and Bishop Whitney at their head, and we will try Sidney Rigdon before this council and let them take an action on his case this morning; and then we will present it to the Church, and let the Church also take an action upon it. I am willing that you should know that my feelings for Sidney Rigdon as a man, as a private citizen, are of the best kind. I have loved that man and always had the very best feelings for him; I have stood in defence of his life and his house in Kirtland, and have lain on the floor, night after night, and week after week, to defend him. There are those who are following Sidney for whom my heart is grieved, I esteem them as good citizens. But when it touches the salvation of the people, I am the man that walks to the line (Exodus 32:25–28).

I am informed that Elder Rigdon is sick; I am also informed that he and his party have had a council this morning, and have concluded not to say anything in their own defense, thinking that would be best for them. I have no idea that Elder Rigdon is any more sick than I am: any how, we have a right to try his case, for he had sufficient notice to prepare himself if he had been disposed. We gave him notice last Tuesday evening, and had it published in the *Neighbor*, and was he sick he could have sent us word to have the case deferred. I heard Elder Rigdon's discourse last Sunday, myself; I heard him pour blessings upon this people in an unbounded degree; I heard him encourage the building up of this city and the Temple; he said he was one with us, and left his blessing upon the congregation. The congregation says to him: "go in peace." I said upon the back of his statements, you *see* that Brother Rigdon is with us. I have not seen that Brother Rigdon has been with us since he returned from Pittsburgh; I have known that he was not with us in spirit, but I took him at his word. The spirit reveals many things which it would not do to tell the public, until it can be proved. But

to come to the point. On Tuesday last, I heard that Elder Rigdon had a meeting the night previous, and had ordained men to be *Prophets, Priests and Kings*. I concluded to go and see Elder Rigdon, and asked Elder Hyde to go with me. We went into his house, and after the usual compliments, I set down directly opposite him, and took hold of his hand. I looked him right in the face and asked him if he had a meeting last night, here, in which men were ordained to be *Prophets, Priests and Kings*? He replied, "no, we had no meeting here; had we Brother Soby?"

"Well, did you have a meeting anywhere, Brother Rigdon, in which men were ordained to be *Prophets, Priests and Kings* ?"

"Well, I don't know; did we have a meeting last night, Brother Soby? Yes, I believe there was one last night; wasn't there Brother Soby, up at your house?"

I saw the disposition of Elder Rigdon to conceal the truth and equivocate, and I determined to know the whole secret. I said to him again, "Elder Rigdon, *did you not ordain those men at that meeting last night* ?"

He replied, "*yes, I suppose I did*."

I then asked Brother Rigdon, *by what authority he ordained Prophets, Priests and Kings?*[6]

With a very significant air he replied "*Oh, I know about that!*"

I will not attempt to describe the feelings I had, nor the look of his countenance, but he equivocated very much. He said there was no meeting *here* last night, and then finally said, I believe there was a meeting at Brother Soby's. I questioned him till he acknowledged that they ordained men to be *Prophets, Priests and Kings* .

I then asked Brother Rigdon; "*do you not think, really, that you hold Keys and Authority above any man, or set of men in this Church even the Twelve*?"

Says he, "I never taught any such doctrine, did I, Brother Soby?"

Says I, "Brother Rigdon, tell me the truth, do you not think

[6]See notes 20, 21, 34, 35, 36, 37, 43, 44, 45, 57, 63.

so?"

He replied, "*yes I do*."

Says I, "that tells the whole story. *Brother Joseph never undertook such important business as you are engaged in, without consulting his brethren*,[7] and especially the Twelve, if they were present." I felt delicate in asking Elder Rigdon these questions, but I knew it was my duty to find out the secret of the whole matter. To evade answering the questions I put to him, he finally said, "don't crowd upon my feelings too much; my feelings are tender, and I don't wish to be crowded". I then proposed to him, that myself and the brethren of the Twelve would call in the evening and converse with him further on the subject, to which he agreed. In the evening eight of the Twelve together with Bishop Whitney, went to Elder Rigdon's and conversed awhile; and finding matters as before stated, we concluded we would go over to Dr. Richards' and there council together what was best to do on the subject. In our council we deemed it necessary to demand his license, and say to him he could not hold it any longer, unless he retracted from his present course and repent of his wickedness. A committee of three was chosen, who went over and demanded his license, but he refused to give it up, at the same time saying, "I did not receive it from you, neither shall I give it up to you." On the strength of this, we published a notice in the *Neighbor* that there would be an action on his case before the Church today.

We have now the quorum before us, before which he will be tried, with the oldest Bishop at their head; and I shall leave the subject for the brethren to take it up, and it is left for us to decide whether we are Latter-day Saints or not.

President Young said further that the Twelve are to be regarded as witnesses in this trial, and not judges: We present ourselves before the High Council as witnesses, and we are prepared to bring other testimony forward if necessary. There may be some who will say that this is not a fair trial, because the opposite party are not here. They have had sufficient notice and time to make their objections, and if

[7]The brethren referred to here were the members of the Holy Order and Council of Fifty, to which organization the Twelve belonged.

they don't appear to make their defence it will prove to me that they are guilty. Elder Rigdon has not conducted himself like a man of God, he has not conducted [himself] like a prophet of God, nor a counsellor to the First President, since he came here. We prefer these charges against him, and the High Council will be obliged to act.

Elder Orson Hyde arose and said as follows: I thought I would present to your view, some things which have transpired since the death of our beloved Prophet and Patriarch, Joseph and Hyrum Smith, who were murdered by the mob. I was in New Haven when I first heard the news, but hardly crediting the report; I went from thence to New York, where I learned the same things, I then concluded I would start to Boston. When I arrived at Boston I met with President Young and one or two others of the Twelve. We held a council together and it was decided to write to Elder Rigdon at Pittsburgh. I was appointed to write the letter. I informed Elder Rigdon of our conclusions, and stated to him that we had decided to return immediately to Nauvoo, and that we should go by the lakes, inasmuch as we deemed it safer and quicker to go that way, than to go through Pittsburgh. I stated also that it was the desire of the Twelve, that Elder Rigdon and Elder Page should meet us at Nauvoo, and after we had rested and mourned for our martyred brethren, we would sit down together and hold a council on the very ground where sleeps the ashes of our deceased friends. This letter was received by Elder Rigdon as we have since learned. Well, what does he do? He comes directly to Nauvoo — he arrived before the Twelve could get there. He immediately entered into measures to call the Church together to appoint a Guardian, and was very anxious to crowd an action before the Twelve arrived, when he knew that it was the request of the Twelve to sit in council together with him before any action was taken before the public. He represented to the congregation that it was necessary that he should return home immediately on account of the situation of his family. Providentially the Twelve came before he had accomplished his design and an action was then taken before the public, and he was defeated. The Church unanimously voted to sustain the Twelve in their office as appointed by President Joseph Smith and the Church — since that action was taken Elder Rigdon has shown no more anxiety to return to Pittsburgh. Now I would ask this congregation,

if Elder Rigdon had known that he was commanded to take the lead of this people, would he have had any reason to fear his success, if he had been sure God had appointed him? Were the Twelve jealous that they should not stand in their place? I heard no such thing. We wanted to sit in council together, and felt that whatever the spirit dictated that should be our course.

There is a way by which all revelations purporting to be from God through any man can be tested. Brother Joseph gave us the plan, says he, when all the quorums are assembled and organized in order, let the revelation be presented to the quorums, if it pass one let it go to another, and if it pass that, to another, and so on until it has passed all the quorums; and if it pass the whole without running against a snag, you may know it is of God. But if it runs against a snag, then says he, it wants enquiring into: you must see to it. *It is known to some who are present that* ***there is a quorum*** *organized where revelation can be tested. Brother Joseph said, let no revelation go to the people until it has been tested here.*[8] *Now I would ask, did Elder Rigdon call the quorum together and there lay his revelation before it, to have it tested? No, he did not wait to call the quorum;* neither did he call the authorities together that were here. He endeavored to ensnare the people and allure their minds by his flowery eloquence; but the plan was defeated. The voice of the people was in favor of sustaining the Twelve to be their leaders. I tell you it is no enviable place for one of that quorum to stand in, to stand as the leaders of this people. The shafts of the enemy are always aimed at the head first. Brother Joseph said some time before he was murdered. "*If I am taken away, upon you, Twelve,*[9] *will rest the responsibility of leading this people,*

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[8]Hyde here refers to the Holy Order. For more on this idea, see *Unpublished Revelations*, v. See also notes 56, 57, 67.

[9]See notes 15, 68. Probably Hyde is here referring to the "Last Charge". Evidence would indicate that the Last Charge was actually given to the Kingdom of God or Council of Fifty, to which organization the Twelve apostles belonged, and not exclusively to the quorum of the Twelve. Benjamin F. Johnson was a member of this Council and was present when the "Last Charge" was given. The following is his testimony concerning what the Prophet actually said:

At one of the last meetings of the Council of Fifty after all had been completed and the Keys of Power committed, and in the presence of the Quorum of the Twelve

and do not be bluffed off by any man. Go forward in the path of your duty though you walk into death. If you will be bold and maintain your ground the Great God will sustain you." And now inasmuch as a charge has been laid upon us, it will be inquired in a day to come if we have been faithful to the charge, and we are responsible for what has been laid upon us.

After the Twelve returned I went to see Elder Rigdon and requested him to meet with us in council; I invited him to attend but he said he was sick; well, I don't know but he was sick, but I am informed that he went the same day and held a meeting somewhere outside the city. Today, there is an excuse. He says he is sick, perhaps it is so. In our conversation on Tuesday evening, when he said he had the Keys and Power he said he did not claim jurisdiction over the Twelve, he claimed jurisdiction over no man. Says I, "Elder Rigdon, if the Twelve were to transgress would you call them to account?" He replied, "No, I have no jurisdiction over them." But was Brother Joseph here and he was to see the Twelve do wrong, we would not have time to wink more than twice, before he would be upon us with a rod and drive us back to the path of duty again. Elder Rigdon says he claims no jurisdiction over the Twelve, nor the Twelve over him. Says I, "Elder Rigdon such a course as this will lead to a division of the Church." He replied, "There will be a good many churches built up all over the world."[10] I asked if all these churches would be subject to one common head. He answered,

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and others who were encircled around him, he arose, gave a review of his life and sufferings, and of the testimonies he had borne, and said that the Lord had now accepted his labors and sacrifices, and did not require him longer to carry the responsibilities and burden and bearing off this kingdom, and turning to those around him, **including the 12**, he said "And in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I now place it ***upon you my brethren of this Council***, and I shake my skirts clear of all responsibility from this time forth," springing from the floor and shaking his skirt at the same time. (A Life Review, by Benjamin F. Johnson, Mss. p. 96, Church Historian's Office; For more on this subject see "The Apostleship — Apostolic Succession — and the Authority of the Quorum of the Twelve", *Doctrine of the Priesthood*, Vol. 7, No. 10 (Oct 1990) pp. 27–30.

[10]Rigdon here speaks of Kingdom building via the Law of Adoption. For more on this see note 29.

"They would not."[11] Elder Young replied, "Then there will be many bodies." He replied, "Oh no!" I then said, "Where there are many heads there is no head at all; and a thing that has got many heads must be a hydra — a monster: a house divided against itself cannot stand." (Matt. 12:25) Elder Rigdon is now going to work to make a division, and yet he said on the stand, he did not want to make a division. When any man comes here with a revelation purporting to be from God, we feel in duty bound to question its validity. This is a kind of furnace (Isaiah 48:10) to prove all things (1 Thes. 5:21), and Elder Rigdon don't like to come into the furnace.

I will now give some testimony which has been handed to me concerning what Elder Rigdon has said. Those who have testified here are ready to testify to the same before the congregation if it is necessary.

I shall omit names unless called upon, and then they shall be forthcoming. One of Mr. Rigdon's party said to this brother, "you are a pretty strong Twelve man I believe: are you not?" He answered: "I am no party man — but I am desirous to obtain the truth." Mr. Rigdon's friend then said, "if you will not tell it to the Twelve, I will tell you our plans." "He then communicated unto me their designs. The substance of which was as follows: that Elder Rigdon was going to feel of the minds of the branches, and then the people of Nauvoo, until he got strong enough to make a party, and if he found that he could raise influence to divide the people he would do so, and let the remainder follow the Twelve."[12]

Elder Hyde continued and said: this was said previous to his discourse at La Harpe; then, he comes here, and says, "I have no authority, I have no jurisdiction over this people whatever." We knew by the spirit that this was in Elder Rigdon's heart before, and we wanted to bring it out. This shows that the whole plan was matured at the time he said he did not want to divide the Church — he had

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[11]See note 12 and text below note 65, also the remarks of Orson Hyde above note 25. See also "Adoption — Law of the Kingdom — Forgotten Doctrine of Mormonism", *Doctrine of the Priesthood*, April 1991, Vol. 8, No. 4, pp. 16–25.

[12]See note 11. For more on this see "Adoption, Law of the Kingdom, Forgotten Doctrine of Mormonism", *Doctrine of the Priesthood*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (April 1991) pp. 16–25.

no jurisdiction, & etc., and he let out the roots of it on Tuesday evening, when we conversed with him. When we demanded his license, he said, "I did not receive it from you, neither shall I give it up to you." He then threatened to turn traitor. His own language was, "inasmuch as you have demanded my license, I shall feel it my duty to publish all your secret meetings, and all the history of the secret works of this Church, in the public journals." He intimated that it would bring a mob upon us, says he, "I know what effect it will have; there is a rod and a scourge awaits this people." Says I, "Elder Rigdon if you want the honor of bringing distress upon this people, you may have it, you may have the honor of it here, and you may have the honor of it in eternity; and every effort you make to bring distress upon this people, will recoil back upon your own head." I have been told since, that he was angry and did not mean to do as he said; but I would ask this congregation, can a man say what is not in his heart? I say he cannot, for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matt. 12:34; Luke 6:45). (*Elder Young says he can prove that Elder Rigdon made use of the same expression previous to our visiting him last Tuesday*.) I replied to him and said, "We have counted the cost and it can't cost us more than our lives, and we have got them ready to pay" (Matt. 10:39). Now what was the idea conveyed by Elder Rigdon's expressions? It was this: If you will let me alone, and not oppose me in my measures, although you are a wicked and iniquitous people, we will be hail fellows well met, and all fellowship together; but if you oppose me, I will expose all your secret wickedness, I will expose all your iniquity. Now I don't know of any man in this Church that has gone deeper into matters than he did in Far West in his oration on the 4th of July.[13] He was the cause of our troubles in Missouri,

[13]See note 66. The oration to which Hyde refers is known as the "Salt Sermon" which Rigdon gave in celebration of American Independence day, on the 4th of July 1838, at Far West Missouri. Ebenezer Robinson has left us the following information on this subject:

"It will be remembered with what assurance the declaration of Independence, was made on the 4th of July, in which it is declared:

'That mob that comes on us to disturb us, it shall be between us and them a war of extermination, for we will follow them, till the last drop of their blood is

and although Brother Joseph tried to restrain him, he would take his own course, and if he goes to exposing the secrets of this Church, as he says, the world will throw him down and trample him under their feet.

Before I went east on the 4th of April last, we were in council with Brother Joseph almost every day for weeks. Says Brother Joseph in one of those councils, "There is something going to happen; I don't know what it is, but *the Lord bids me* to hasten and give you your Endowment before the temple is finished." He *conducted us through every ordinance of the Holy Priesthood*, and when he had gone thro*ugh with all the ordinances* he rejoiced very much, and says, "Now if they kill me *you have got all the Keys*[14], and all the

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spilled, or else they will have to exterminate us; for we will carry the seat of war to their own houses, and their own families, and one party or the other shall be utterly destroyed. Remember it all MEN.' — S. Rigdon's oration.

"Let it be distinctly understood that president Rigdon was not alone responsible for the sentiment expressed in his oration, as that was a carefully prepared document, previously written, and well understood by the First Presidency, but Elder Rigdon was the mouth piece to deliver it, as he was a natural orator, and his delivery was powerful and effective.

"Several Missouri gentlemen of note, from other counties, were present on the speaker's stand at its delivery, with Joseph Smith, jr., President, and Hyrum Smith Vice President of the day, and at the conclusion of the oration, when the President of the day led off with the shout of Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna, and joined in the shout by the vast multitude, these Missouri gentlemen began to shout hurrah, but they soon saw that did not time with the other, and they ceased shouting.

"A copy of the oration was furnished the editor, and printed in "*The Far West*," a weekly newspaper printed in Liberty, the county seat of Clay county. It was also printed in pamphlet form, by the writer of this, in the printing office of the *Elders' Journal*, in the city of Far West, a copy of which we have preserved.

"This oration, and the stand taken by the church in endorsing it, and its publication, undoubtedly exerted a powerful influence in arousing the people of the whole upper Missouri country." *The Return*, Vol 1: (November 1889) 170–71.

[14]This is a clear statement to the effect that the Keys of the Priesthood are conferred in the Temple Ordinances, and not particularly by being ordained an Apostle. It is in the Endowment and Second Anointing that a man is ordained a King and Priest and given the Sealing Keys of Elijah. For more on this see "The Nauvoo Doctrine on Priesthood in Light of Alma Chapter 13", *Doctrine of the Priesthood* Vol. 3, No. 2 (December 1986); see also "The Apostleship — Apostolic Succession — and the Authority of the Quorum of the Twelve", *Doctrine of the Priesthood*, Vol. 7. No. 10 (Oct 1990); See also "The Diaries and Writings of Bishop George Miller", to be published in a forthcoming issue of *Doctrine of the Priesthood*).

ordinances and you can confer them upon others, and the hosts of Satan will not be able to tear down this Kingdom as fast as you will be able to build it up"; and now says he, "On your shoulders will the responsibility of leading this people rest, for the Lord is going to let me rest a while." Now why did he say *to the Twelve*,[15] "On *your* shoulders will this responsibility rest", *why did he not mention Brother Hyrum?*[16] *The spirit knew that Hyrum would be taken with him, and hence he did not mention his name*. Elder Rigdon's name was not mentioned, although he was here all the time, *but he did not attend our councils*.[17]

When we were coming away last Tuesday evening, Elder Rigdon said, "You are not led by the Lord, and I have known it for a long time that you were not led by the Lord."[18] In his discourse

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[15]See note 9. There is no known document which was written before the Prophet's death which would show that the Prophet made a statement as given above explicitly to the Quorum of the Twelve. In all probability, Hyde is here referring to the "Last Charge" which was given to the Council of Fifty, and to which body the Twelve belonged. Since the Council of Fifty or Kingdom of God was a secret organization, they could not come forward and testify regarding these things. However the situation with the Quorum of the Twelve was different — they were known to the public, and it was therefore convenient for them to take all the credits. For more on this see "The Apostleship — Apostolic Succession — and the Authority of the Quorum of the Twelve", *Doctrine of the Priesthood*, Vol. 7 No. 10, October 1990.

[16]See note 47. The above is a tactful admission that the Prophet had intended for Hyrum to stand in his place in the event of his untimely death. It was for this reason among others, that the Prophet did not want Hyrum to accompany him to Carthage. For more on this see: "The Prophet's Nauvoo Teaching on the Office of the Church Patriarch and the Fulness of the Patriarchal Priesthood", *Doctrine of the Priesthood*, Vol. 8, No. 8, Aug 1991. See also "New Amalgamated Texts of Discourses Given by the Prophet Joseph Smith, Part 1: The Prophet's Nauvoo Teaching on the Office of Church Patriarch, *Doctrine of the Priesthood*, Vol. 8, No. 9, Sept. 1991; "The Matriarchal Priestesshood and Emma's Right to Succession as Presiding High Priestess and Queen", *Doctrine of the Priesthood*, Vol. 8, No. 3, March 1991, pp. 10–11)

[17]See Appendix A and B. See also notes 44, 46, 57, 64. Rigdon did attend some of the meetings of the Council of Fifty and Holy Order and as such was involved in their councils. It is possible that Hyde is here referring to meetings between the First Presidency and the quorum of the Twelve, wherein Rigdon did not attend.

[18]See note 32. If this is true, it can only be said that Rigdon waxed eloquent in defense of the Prophet at the April 1844 conference. See appendix D. But this notwithstanding, we do well to remember that even as early as the Kirtland period,

before the people the first Sunday after he came here, he stated that Joseph Smith yet holds the Keys of this Kingdom, for he had seen it since he was dead. When Elder Rigdon made this remark, says I to him, "I defy any man to show that we have adopted any measure, only what Joseph has directed us." We have all the while sought to carry out those measures which he has labored at such pains to establish.[19] Now if Brother Joseph yet holds the Keys of this Kingdom, I would ask how is any man going to get by Joseph into the Celestial Kingdom of God, if they oppose and seek to destroy the principles laid down by Brother Joseph. They can't get over it, neither can they get by him. I will now leave the subject with Brother Parley for he is a witness in the matter.

Elder Parley P. Pratt arose to give his testimony concerning this case. He said: In the first place I will say that there is no man present, save one, who has been acquainted with Elder Rigdon longer than I have. Elder Hyde knew him before I did. I have been in church fellowship with him for 15 or 16 years. I was a member of the same church with him before we heard this gospel; I was the first man who presented the Book of Mormon to him, and bore testimony to him concerning the gospel. I witnessed his coming into this Church — I have feelings for him as a friend of the strongest kind, and ever have felt an interest for him — I would be amongst the first to rejoice to see him walk up as a counsellor with us. I have no feelings but in his favor. But the salvation of this Church is of far more importance than anything else, and we are determined to walk up to our duty, let it come against whom it may. After Brother Rigdon came from Pittsburgh, I waited on him to bid him welcome, but he was so crowded with friends shaking hands and welcoming him back that I said to him, Elder Rigdon, you are busy today, we will not interrupt you today, but tomorrow morning the few of the Twelve who are here will want to meet with you, and sit down in council together. We expect to hear you preach. In the morning I called upon him to go with me to Brother Taylor's, as we had to hold our councils at Elder Taylor's, he being confined to his bed, by the wounds he received

Rigdon proved himself to be unstable and unreliable in the Prophet's absence. For more on this see Appendix A and B.

[19]See note 2.

from the mob. He made an excuse, saying, that he was engaged with a strange gentleman, and could not leave him then, but would come when he got through. We waited until it was almost meeting time, and instead of coming to meet with us, he went directly to the meeting. He came here and preached, and related his vision or revelation to appoint a guardian. We still deferred and waited to meet with him in council, until, to our astonishment, without our knowledge, he caused an appointment to be made for the next Thursday for the Church to choose their guardian; and this to in the absence of the more part of the Quorum of the Twelve, and even without consulting the High Council of the Church. I knew such a course would divide the Church, and I protested against it, and determined to come to the stand if the motion was to proceed and dismiss the meeting. It fortunately happened that the Twelve came in time to attend the meeting which was changed by them into a special conference. We made another effort to get Elder Rigdon to sit in council with the Quorum of the Twelve. We met at the time appointed and waited something like three hours before he came. He finally came and we then asked him to give us the relation of his vision or revelation, which he did. He said it was shown to him that there were no authorities left in the Church who could act. "When Joseph was alive the people had confidence in the quorums, but now they had not that confidence; the people must choose some man they can have confidence in, to act." Said I to him, "Elder Rigdon, there never was a time when the people were more willing to hearken to council and be agreed, than they are now." Said I, "Has not the Almighty God established authorities in this Church by Joseph Smith, such as the Quorum of the Twelve, the High Council and other quorums, and have they not power to act, and will they not be damned if they do not act; and will not the people be damned if they do not give heed to these authorities?" He answered, "Yes"; when not twenty minutes before he said there was no authorities in the Church! Said I, "Elder Rigdon, I object to that meeting you got up, in the name of the Twelve. It is got up without the consent or advice of those of the Twelve who are here, at present we don't need to adopt any new measures, we only need to carry out the measures which God has revealed, and when we have done this, God will give us more; and on these grounds, I object to the meeting." Says he,

"There is no need to appoint another officer. We have only to sustain the officers, as they are already organized; and I pledge myself there shall be no other business brought up on Thursday, only the regular prayer meeting." When I had got this pledge from him I told the people that Thursday's meeting would only be a prayer meeting. But after this, some of the people went to him and he turned round again, and said it was a business meeting. I know that he said no business should be done at that meeting, and afterwards said it should be a business meeting. I then saw that this was a deep and cunning plan laid to divide the best people that ever lived.

On last Sunday we heard preaching all day about things along way ahead — terrible battles to be fought somewhere by the brook Kedron. Their preaching gave me a text which I want to preach from, it is somewhere in Webster's Spelling Book, and I suppose the little boys can tell me where. However it is a story of a "country maid and her milk pail," & etc. The moral was that when men suffer their imaginations to be amused with things along way ahead, they suffer loss by neglecting those things which immediately concern them. The Great God said through Joseph — "Build this temple; I give you a sufficient time to build it, and if you do not build it by the appointed time, you shall be rejected as a people with your dead." I thought we were concerned in building up this place and defending it, and while we were immediately concerned in all these important matters, the day was spent in talking about Queen Victoria, battles, & etc., and things which were calculated to draw our minds away from those things wherein our eternal interest is at stake. When he blessed the people I said amen, and when he said our persecutions were about over, and cried peace, peace, I hoped it would be so, if we could get it. He did, by hard straining get it out that we might go on and build the temple and build up the city.

On Tuesday, as has been stated, we went to Elder Rigdon's house, when I had heard that he had been ordaining men *to unheard of offices*.[20] *These men were in no quorum,*[21] *and under nobody's direction, nor authority*, but Elder Rigdon's own revelations. We protested against it. *He claimed he had Authority and Keys over*

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[20]Pratt is not here being altogether forthright in his testimony. As will be seen John Taylor and others were more frank and open in their discussion of the issues.

any one else. By and bye we had more of his revelations. Says he, "I saw all this before I left Pittsburgh." I then charged him with endeavoring to palm upon the people false revelations and lies in the name of the Lord. He then gave us another slice of his revelation, in addition to what he had already told us. It was that he was to help to fight a bloody battle in some appointed place, the particulars of which had been revealed to him. This battle was not to be a war of words, not a battle with the tongue, but says he, "with the *'sword'* and it will be a bloody battle; the Great God has revealed it to me, and no one shall beat me out of it!" Says I to him, "If you build up churches and ordain men to preach who are not subject to the Twelve, how are they to be governed. Suppose the Twelve, having authority to regulate all the churches in all the world[22] according to the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, should publish an epistle to the churches, they will say, who are the Twelve? We are not under the authority of the Twelve. Will this not be the result?"

The whole trial proceeding witnesses that the Prophet Joseph Smith did in fact anoint men Kings and Priests. But this was done secretly, and in this sense as far as the general public was concerned, they were "unheard of offices".

[21]See note 6. Pratt here speaks of the Holy Order which was first organized by the Prophet on May 4th, 1842. It was through this organization that worthy recipients were initiated into the Kingdom through the Endowment and sealing ordinances. Thus the Holy Order was a Priesthood body which had jurisdiction in the administration of Temple Ordinances. In his free style ordinations of Kings and Priests, Rigdon had unlawfully bypassed the authority of this important "Quorum".

[22]See notes 38, 48, 68. Pratt here refers to the Prophet's 1835 revelation on Priesthood (see D&C 107:23, 25, 90). When this revelation was given, and up until the time of the Prophet's death, these passages were interpreted as having reference exclusively to the mission field, where there was no organized Stake of Zion. In other words, the jurisdiction of the Twelve was everywhere, except in Zion. However, after the Prophets's death, and contrary to his teachings, the quorum of the Twelve began to interpret these verses as giving them universal jurisdiction over all the earth, including Zion. For more on this see "The Apostleship — Apostolic Succession — and the Authority of the Quorum of the Twelve", *Doctrine of the Priesthood*, Vol. 7, No. 10, October 1990.

The truth is, according to the Prophet's teachings, as well as those of President Young, it was those who had been ordained "Kings and Priests" who held jurisdiction "in all the world" including Zion. The following remarks were made by President Young in the Nauvoo Temple, on Friday, December 26th, 1845:

I asked the question to one of his new prophets, "Do you consider yourself under the direction of the Twelve?" He hesitated a while and replied, "I hope Elder Rigdon and the Twelve will be united and walk together, if not I shall not be under the direction of the Twelve, only so far as they agree with Elder Rigdon. I shall be under the direction of the revelations as given to Elder Rigdon, I regard him as my Prophet, Seer, and Revelator." Now the old revelations require us to build this temple, that we may receive our Endowment, and all the ordinances and Priesthood,[23] whereby we may save ourselves and our dead. The new revelation is to draw the people to Pittsburgh, and scatter them abroad; and do anything and everything but that which the old revelations bid us do. Some of the brethren, Elders Young, and Orson Pratt, and others then said to him that the matter must be settled before he went away to Pittsburgh, either one way or the other. We labored with him till near twelve o'clock, but the split seemed only to grow wider and wider. Says I, "Elder Rigdon, if the God of Heaven has sent me to tell what will be, you will never fulfill your revelation; I have no more confidence in your revelations than I have in Gladden Bishop's. One said he would marry the Queen of England, and the other said he would take her by the nose." *Now brethren it was for this ordaining men to unheard of offices in an illegal manner, and the proceedings of their secret meetings, that the fellowship of the Twelve was withdrawn from Elder Rigdon*. I was one of the committee who went to demand his license, and acted as spokesman. I made the demand in a respectful manner, taking care not to do anything intentionally to wound his feelings. When I demanded

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"Every man that gets his Endowment whether he is [a] High Priest or Seventy may go into any part of the world and build up the Kingdom *if he has the Keys* — or onto any Island. We have been ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood which is the highest order of Priesthood and it has many branches or offices — And those who have come in here and have received their washing and anointing will be ordained *Kings and Priests* and will then have received the *Fullness of the Priesthood*, all that can be given on Earth, for Brother Joseph said he had given us all that could be given to man on the Earth. (*TPBY* 1:12/26/45; see also "The Nauvoo Diaries and Writings of William Clayton", December 26th, 1845, to be published in a future issue of *Doctrine of the Priesthood*).

[23]D&C 124:27–39. See also note 2.

his license he refused to give it up as has already been observed, and says he, "I shall now take the liberty to publish to the world, all the secret works of this Church, and stir up the world against you", and says he, "I know the result both on you and the Church, and myself" — this was letting out a little more of his revelation. He then said, "I have sat and laughed in my sleeve at the proceedings of the Twelve this evening, for they have been fulfilling in this last act, the vision I had at Pittsburgh. I knew you would withdraw fellowship from me, I knew you would oppose me, in all my movements. It was all shown to me in the vision before I left Pittsburgh." Thought I to myself, "Oh consistency, where hast thou fled? Here are revelations manufactured as fast as they are needed to suit the circumstances."

Last Sunday Elder Rigdon said we were a blessed people. Now he says he has known ever since before he left Pittsburgh, that this same blessed people would cut him off before he left them.

He further said, "I am not going to injure this people; I don't want to make a division," and soon after said, "I know this people have not been led by the Lord for a long time." He was talking about exposing our secrets;[24] Elder Hyde then said he was glad he had got at the roots of his feelings; Elder Rigdon replied "I don't do it with a design to injure this people, as before stated."

Now the Quorum of the Twelve have not offered a new revelation from the time of the massacre of our beloved brethren, Joseph and Hyrum, but we have spent all our time, early and late, to do the things the God of Heaven commanded us to do through Brother Joseph. Here are the principles of Brother Joseph, our Prophet, who laid the foundation of this work, and the Twelve have labored to carry them out. We have not said, go to Black River, nor to Prairie du Chien, nor to Pittsburgh, but we have said take the sword of the spirit (Eph. 6:17), and do the things commanded and enjoined by Brother Joseph. Only think of the idea, after blessing the congregation in the manner he did last Sabbath, in two days after he

[24] See note 50. No doubt, the secrets to which Rigdon referred are Plural Marriage, the Holy Order and Kingdom or Council of Fifty and associated activities. For more on this see Appendix D.

says, "This people have not been led by the Lord for a long time, and I have known it": And why? Because we fulfilled his own revelation by cutting him off from the Church; but if we had not cut him off nor opposed him in his secret corner of treachery and apostasy, we should have been a very good people, and we would all fellowship together.

I will here read from the book of Doctrine and Covenants, page 102, new edition, paragraph 11, to show concerning the legal authorities of this Church:

["Of the Melchizedek Priesthood, three Presiding High Priests, chosen by the body [of the Priesthood], appointed and ordained to that office, and upheld by the confidence, faith, and prayer of the church, form a quorum of the Presidency of the Church. The twelve traveling councilors are called to be the Twelve Apostles, or special witnesses of the name of Christ ***in all the world*** — thus differing from other officers in the church in the duties of their calling. And they form a quorum, equal in authority and power to the three presidents previously mentioned."] (See D & C 107:22–24)

Now you ask, "Where is the proper Authority and Power for us to look to?" We answer, "Here is a Power and Authority equal to the First Presidency; equal and nothing more." But suppose you uphold Elder Rigdon's theory, what have you got? You have got one of the quorum which does not even form a majority, and consequently has no power to act (D & C 107:27–29). But it would make no odds who you look to for your leaders, if they are not chosen and upheld by the faith and prayer of the Church, and then they must walk according to the revelations, or there is no power in their appointment. I say and bear testimony that the things revealed to Sidney Rigdon touching the great battles to be fought somewhere; the secret meetings; the ordination of officers, and the government of this Church, is a revelation of falsehood and delusion, calculated to lead the people astray. It will result in open apostasy, and is designed to bring destruction upon us, or else it will result in speedy repentance and a turning round to the principles and revelations laid down by our martyred prophet.

Elder Orson Hyde arose again and said he wanted to relate a little story: It is only about two minutes long, and I think it will serve to illustrate the present position of this Church. Elder Rigdon's remarks not only authorized, but courted a division of the Church, and at the same time he acknowledged that he had no jurisdiction over the Church whatever. The story is this, "in the days of King Solomon there were two women who lived in the same house, and had each a child. One night one of the women overlay her child, and when she awoke her child was dead. As soon as she discovered this, she took her own dead child and placed it by the side of the mother of the living child, and took the living child to herself. When the mother of the living child awoke in the morning to give her child suck, behold it was dead; but when she had considered it, she found it was not her child; and the other woman said nay: but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son. And this said no; but the dead is thy son, and the living is my son. They then referred the matter to King Solomon, who said, the one saith this is my son that liveth, and thy son is dead. And the other saith, nay; but thy son is the dead, and my son is the living. And the King said, "bring me a sword,' and they brought a sword before the King, and the King said; 'divide the living child in two, and give half to the one and half to the other.' But the woman whose the living child was, said to the King, 'Oh my lord the King, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it;' for her bowels yearned over her son. But the other said, "let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it." (1 Kings 3:16–28) Now brethren the Twelve say let not the child be divided; but Elder Rigdon says let the child be divided, for I profess to have no claim or jurisdiction over it; and I believe if the Great God would speak from heaven this morning, he would say to the Twelve, ye are the mother, (or rather the father) of the living child, and the Church shall not be divided, for I say it in the name of the Great God. I say let not the child be divided; let it live; and all the congregation said amen.

Elder Amasa Lyman said: So far as I am acquainted with what has been said, it is correct, and the most of it has been under my own observation. It would therefore be useless to recapitulate. But there are some things connected with the history of this event that

should speak to the understanding of the individuals to whom this case is to be submitted. The Twelve have already told their mind on the subject and have acted on it. There is a curiosity connected with the revelation of this individual, who is so favored of heaven as to have gathered the rays of light from the upper world; intelligence and wonderful things, that other men never thought of. Even Gladden Bishop never thought of such wonderful things. Now where has this individual been for these years past? Has he been laboring to support and uphold the man whom God has appointed to bring forth His work? Has he been endeavoring for the last four or five years to build up the principles taught and laid down by the man of God? There are men here present who have travelled through the length and breadth of these United States, and to Europe, and some who have travelled as far as Palestine to carry out and establish the principles which have been laid down by our deceased prophet, and yet the Great God has not made known to any of these men the wonderful things made known in this revelation. Neither has Elder Marks nor the Twelve received any such wonderful revelation. But this man who has been asleep all the while, when he was not too sick, to sleep and smoke his pipe, and take his drink; correspond with John C. Bennett,[25] and other mean, corrupt men. This is the character of the man on whom shines the light of revelation; this is the man who says the Twelve have gone astray and this Church is not led by the Lord. This man is made generalissimo of all the armies of the Gentiles, on both sides I suppose; this is the man who is to fight these wonderful battles till the blood of the slain flow as high as the horse's bridles in the brook Kedron. Elder Brigham, nor any of the Twelve did not get this wonderful power; they have not got the same spirit. But these men who obtain these great revelations carry the spirit about with them; you can smell it as soon as you come near enough

[25]See text below note 65. Suspicions of Rigdon being guilty of treachery in corresponding with John C. Bennett, commenced in August of 1842, when John C. Bennett published a letter which the Prophet wrote to Rigdon's daughter Nancy, in hopes of persuading her to become his plural wife. For more on this see Appendix A, note 69.

to feel their breath.[26] Elder Rigdon's plan is to divide the Church, although he claims no jurisdiction.

This wonderful spirit of revelation has fallen on a great many. Here is a revelation come away from Michigan, which points out a Mr. Strang, as the one to take the lead of this people.[27] So Brother Sidney is not the only man who professes to have been appointed to lead this Church. *The Devil seems to have set a good many hooks and baited them very nice, that some may be sure to catch*. Here is another revelation come from the wonderful town of Appanooce,[28] yes God has seen fit to send a revelation from Appanooce; but the Twelve are so wicked they cannot get it. The great John C. Bennett said at the conference when he first came here, that he sustained the same position in [the] First Presidency, as the Holy Ghost does to the Father and Son. He now says that Elder Rigdon is to take the Presidency, and he is appointed to Elder Rigdon's place. Now you see it is impossible for this people to go after them all. When Elder Rigdon was in Pittsburgh he saw a great many things, and I dare venture to say, that when the news reaches him of your action today, it will bring another slice of his revelation; he no doubt saw it all before he left Pittsburgh. It is plain beyond a doubt that Elder Rigdon came here with a spirit as corrupt as hell; because the effects produced by all his movements are as corrupt as can be. He first told the people he came here to do one thing, afterwards he said he would do another quite opposite. He said God had sent him here to see that the Church was built up to Joseph,[29] and the least departure from this, he said, was sure to result in the destruction of the Church. He

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[26]It would seem that Lyman here speaks of alcohol. The adoption of the "Word of Wisdom" as a mandatory Law and the policy of its rigid enforcement was not practiced in the Church until the administration of President Heber J. Grant.

[27]Strang produced a letter which was supposedly written by the Prophet, wherein Strang was appointed his successor. The letter has since been proven to be a fraud.

[28]Lyman here speaks of a revelation produced by John C. Bennett which appointed himself and Rigdon at the head of the Church.

[29]See notes 10, 33, 40, 65. Rigdon here speaks of the Church being built up to Joseph through the Saints being adopted to the Prophet as sons and daughters. For more on this see "Adoption — Law of the Kingdom — Forgotten Doctrine of Mormonism, Doctrine of the Priesthood" Vol. 8, No. 4, April 1991, pp. 16–25.

said, wo, wo, wo unto this people if they do not make a right choice. And again he says he saw that the people would reject him. He said there was an important passage in the scriptures which had to be fulfilled. He did not tell us what it was, but we learned that it was that part of Isaiah's prophecy where he says, "the stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner." (Psalms 118:22; Matt 21:42; Mark 10:12; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:7) Now it appears that Isaiah's prophecy *must* be proved true, if it has to ruin the whole Church to do it. The Temple must be forsaken and not be finished, and all that Joseph has done must be rejected, to carry out his notion that he (Sidney) was some great one. For the last four or five years we have never heard of Sidney's getting a revelation, but as soon as Brother Joseph is out of the way, he can manufacture one to allure the people and destroy them. Now after he has given his testimony to the world; after finding fault with God because he happened to get into jail in Missouri; and because he was poor: yet this is the man that can get such wonderful revelations. Brother Parley and Brigham suffered in Missouri, but did not find fault with God; they don't get such wonderful things — Now this is the man who has got the Keys of Conquest; *the Keys of David*,[30] (Isaiah 22:22; Rev.

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[30] See notes 42, 51, 66. Probably Rigdon received his first ideas about the "Keys of David" from the Prophet Joseph Smith in the meetings of the Council of Fifty. On March 10th, 1844, which was the day that the first preliminary meeting of the Kingdom was held, the Prophet made the following statement:

"Although David was a king, he never did obtain the spirit and power of Elijah and the fullness of the Priesthood; and the Priesthood that he received, and the throne and kingdom of David is to be taken from him and given to another by the name of David in the last days, raised up out of his lineage." (*HC* 6:253; *TPJS* 339; *WJS* 331)

That the Prophet discussed the "Keys of David" in the Council of Fifty is evident from the following statement which was made by President Young on October 7th, 1863:

"Joseph Smith [the third] that now is living in the State of Illinois, the son of Joseph the Prophet, will never lead the Latter-day Saints; he may lead apostates.

"I am a witness that Joseph Smith the Prophet had a son born to him after his death. He received his death wound about twenty-four minutes past five in the afternoon of the 27th of June, 1844; and in the following fall he had a son born to him. Long before his death Joseph said to me, "I shall have a son born to me,

3:7) Keys which the Twelve never heard was to be given to [a] man, who had, in a manner, curse[d] God to His face. It may be plead that Sidney Rigdon may be mistaken. If he should, it is not the first time he has been mistaken in his revelations. But Joseph Smith never was mistaken in his revelations. He never commenced to do a thing and when he had got it half done, turn round and quit it.

Sidney's first revelation in Kirtland was telling the people that the Kingdom was rent from them, and they might as well all go home for they were rejected.[31] The Saints felt very bad and were almost distracted. When Brother Joseph came home, (who was absent at the time) he called Sidney into council and there told him he had lied in the name of the Lord; and says he, "you had better give up your license and divest yourself of all the authority you can, for

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and his name shall be called David; and on him, *in some future time*, will rest the responsibility that now rests upon me." This is Joseph's declaration to me and others, some time before his death. I can produce plenty of witnesses to the truth of this, if necessary.

"If Joseph Smith was a prophet, we will take his words for what they are worth; if he was not a prophet, then are we deceived, and our professions and testimonies relating to the kingdom of God are void. . . . .

"It has been told you what Joseph the prophet said with regard to the keys of the priesthood. Here are men, sitting around me, that sat in the Prophet Joseph's secret counsels year after year; I refer to the Twelve Apostles and some others; they heard Joseph say thousands of things that the people have never yet heard" (TPBY 5:10/7/63; See also "Four Unpublished Sermons Given By President Brigham Young, Regarding The Prophet Joseph Smith's Family And Patriarchal Succession to the Keys of the Kingdom", to be published in *Doctrine of the Priesthood* Vol 9, No. 1, Jan 1992; for more on this subject see "The Matriarchal Priesthesshood and Emma's Right to Succession as Presiding High Priestess and Queen", Doctrine of the Priesthood, Vol. 8, No. 3, March 1991, pp. 10, 12)

[31] This or a similar incident is described by the Prophet Joseph Smith in the following letter which he wrote to William W. Phelps on July 31st, 1832:

"Sidney learned the feelings of the Brethren in whom he had placed so much confidence for whom he had endured so much fatigue & suffering & whom he loved with so much love his heart was grieved his spirits failed & for a moment he became frantic & the adversary taking the advantage, he spake unadvisedly with his lips after receiving a severe chastisement resigned his commission and became a private member in the church, but has since repented like Peter of old and after a little suffering by the buffeting of Satan has been restored to his high standing in the church of God" (*The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* 247; see also *History of the Church* 2:51)

you will go into the hands of Satan, and he will handle you as one man handleth another, and the less authority you have the better for you." Sidney gave up two licenses to Brother Whitney, (who has got them at this day) and according to his own testimony, he was handled by Satan just as Brother Joseph said, and weltered in the most extreme agony for about two or three months, and then Brother Joseph seeing that he had repented, said that he had suffered enough and restored him again. He made a tremendous blunder at the first revelation, but we would hardly suppose that a man who has been in the Church so long as Sidney has, would make such a monstrous blunder as he has made this time. The object of Sidney's revelation was to divide the Church and scatter it. Brother Joseph has said at different times, that if Elder Rigdon was to lead the Church twelve months, he would lead them to the Devil. When he attempted to lead the people in Kirtland, it was to lead them to the Devil, and when he made the attempt this time, it was for the same purpose. When he was making his flowery sermon and endeavoring to captivate the people by his eloquence, they looked, and when he had got through, behold they had seen nothing; and when he found that there were those who were on the alert, and that there were men in whose ears the God of Heaven would whisper, and they would discover his principles, he could not stand it; he was going to run; he was in a wonderful hurry to get back to Pittsburgh. He was determined not to let Brother Young pull the things out of him. I presume the atmosphere did not feel very congenial to his spirit. After we had been [to see him] and spent the evening with him last Tuesday and had concluded to demand his license, he then said he was going to publish the history of all the secrets of this Church. I think if he don't give a straighter history than he has given in his revelation, we shall not need to be at the trouble to go abroad and contradict it, for he will contradict himself. He took a position when he first came here, but since that he has left the ground entirely. If he talks with one of Brother Joseph's friends, he will say, "I admit that Joseph held the Keys of the Kingdom at his death," but if he talks with those who are not Joseph's friends, he will say, "I knew he was not led of God for a long time."[32] In our council in

[32] See note 18. It would appear from this that Rigdon was for Rigdon, more than he was either for or against the "measures of Joseph".

the Seventy's Hall, he said that this vision was a continuation of the vision recorded in the book of Doctrine and Covenants (D & C 76). There was however this difference, the one in the Doctrine and Covenants was an open vision, but the vision he received in Pittsburgh was a mental vision, a vision presented to the mind. Now it seems very likely that while Brother Sidney was maturing his plans in Pittsburgh, and laying his schemes as to what course he would pursue, it was very natural to see that the Church would cut him off. There are many who seem to be in difficulty concerning Sidney Rigdon's standing in the Church during the time he has been wallowing in his filth and corruption for four or five years past. I know how he has stood, but I rather some one else would tell it, I shall therefore leave the subject.

Elder John Taylor arose and said: I wish to make a few remarks, and to give in my testimony in this case. There has already been much said, sufficient to criminate Elder Rigdon, and to prove satisfactorily to the minds of every unprejudiced person, that he is unworthy of the confidence we have reposed in him; that he has dishonored his high and holy calling, and has in every way disqualified himself to act in that relationship to the Church, which he has heretofore sustained. We did not investigate his conduct or character previous to the conference before alluded to, in order to prove this; his own acts and deeds since his return from Pittsburgh, as they have been set forth before this conference, are sufficient to establish that fact. It may be supposed by some that the Twelve are enemies to Elder Rigdon. So far from this, they have courted his company. They invited him frequently to their councils and have shown every mark of esteem, deference and respect, which his long standing in the Church, his years, his talent and his calling would entitle him to. They have been extremely solicitous to cultivate a friendly feeling, and not till they were forced with overwhelming testimony, have they taken steps in the matter; but they have a duty to God and to this Church to perform; and whatever may be their personal predilections, prejudices or feelings; they feel bound by the relationship they sustain to this Church and to God, to lay aside all private feelings and secondary considerations in the fulfillment of the great work that they are called upon to perform.

Elder Rigdon was appointed by President Smith to go to Pittsburgh and build up a Church; but he was expressly forbid to take anyone with him.[33] Now I would ask, has Elder Rigdon accomplished his mission? Has he sought to build up the Church according to President Smith's order? No. *He has been holding secret meetings; he has* ***ordained men illegally****, and* ***contrary to the order of the priesthood;***[34] *he has been ordaining men to the offices of* ***Prophets, Priests*** *and* ***Kings****; whereas* ***he does not hold that office himself;***[35] *who does not know that this is wrong? There is not an officer belonging to the Church but what is acquainted with this fact. Can a Teacher ordain a Priest? Can a Priest ordain an Elder? Can an Elder ordain a High Priest, or any of the former ordain an Apostle?*[36] [Or can a member of the First Presidency such

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[33]See note 29.

[34]See note 6. In accordance with the Law of the Priesthood, such ordinations were to take place by means of an anointing in the Endowment and under the direction of him who holds and presides in the Sealing Keys of the Priesthood.

[35]See note 6. Rigdon had received his endowment, but he never did receive the Second Anointing.

[36]See note 60. In this statement we find an open admission that the Priesthood office of Kings and Priests is above that of the First Presidency. This is precisely what the Prophet Joseph Smith taught on July 23rd, 1843, when he made the following remarks:

"Last Monday morning, certain men came to me [and said:] "Brother Joseph, Hyrum is no Prophet — he can't lead the Church — you must lead the Church! If you resign, [all things will go wrong; you must not resign; if you do the Church will be scattered."]

I felt [to make them] curious and said — "Have we [not] learned in [the scriptures about] a Priesthood after the Order of Melchizedek, [which includes the offices of] Prophet, Priest and King (Gen. 14:18; Psalms 110:4; Heb. 7:1; 1 Peter 2:9; Rev. 1:6; D & C 76:56; 110:11–16).

[I never said I was going to resign — I simply proclaimed that I had bequeathed to my brother Hyrum the prophetic power and authority that rightly belongs to the Patriarchal Office which he holds by birthright. Hyrum now stands as Prophet to the Church] — and I [in turn, when the Temple is completed] will [be] advance[d in the Priesthood] from [the office of a] Prophet to [that of] Priest, and then to [the office of] King — not to the kingdoms of this Earth, but [to the Kingdom] of the Most High God. If I should [live to establish the Kingdom of God on the Earth] would there [not] be a great many [of my enemies] disappointed in Missouri? (New Amalgamated Texts of Discourses Given by the Prophet Joseph Smith, Part 1, July 23rd, 1843 discourse; see also *The Words Of Joseph Smith* 234; *TPJS* 318; Most information in brackets is taken from the Prophet's July 16th, 1843 speech, a new amalgamated text of which is also found in the above source)

as President Rigdon, ordain a King and Priest who has not already himself been anointed and ordained and sealed as such?] *You all know they could not,* ***it is contrary to the order of God****;* and yet we find that President Rigdon, a man who ought to know better — who does know better — *has been ordaining men to office[s] that he does not hold himself:*[37] *and yet he has come to us with a revelation to lead this Church to the Celestial Kingdom of God; and even if he had the authority to ordain these men, he could not do it in and of himself* ***without the accompanying ordinances****, and under the circumstances which he did. There are numbers here who can bear witness to the truth of what I now say.* These things go plainly to show that his mind is enveloped in darkness, that he is ignorant and blinded by the Devil, and incompetent to fulfill the work which he has undertaken.

There are some who would insinuate that we should be merciful; we have been as merciful as we could be in the fulfillment of our official duties. *But if we pass over such gross violations of the ordinances of God's house,* and such departures from the revelations of God; *if such ordinations and organizations are suffered to proceed, we shall, as a people, soon be destroyed.* I see men in this congregation *who have received illegal ordinations, ordinations imparted through a perversion of the Priesthood, and through the influence of an improper spirit.* Who wants to see their friends destroyed in this way? A man may receive a spirit in a few minutes, the which it will take him years to get entirely rid of. *I don't want any man with such a spirit to put his hands on my head, or on the head of any of my brethren.*

Some people talk as though they considered these things very little matters; *but it was for a transgression of this kind that Satan and his angels was cast out of heaven, and it is those very principles that have destroyed the Church in every age of the world.* It was not for drunkenness, theft nor any other act of immorality that Satan was hurled from heaven, but for resisting authority, and trying to subvert the order of God. And this is the thing that Elder Rigdon is guilty of; which is calculated to lead men to destruction. I consider

[37]See note 35.

that this conference has had evidence enough before it in relation to the matter. We have tried him who said he was a prophet, and sent of God with revelations to this Church, and found him a liar. I feel sorry for him as a man, but I also feel sorry for others whom he is leading astray. What has been the cause of all our difficulties? Why, a little difference of feeling, a little difference of opinion, a little difference of spirit, and this *little* difference has finally ended in bloodshed and murder. I do not blame those men who shot our beloved brethren, Joseph and Hyrum Smith, one hundredth part as much as William and Wilson Law, the Fosters and the Higbees: it is true they are murderers, but I consider that those men who pointed their guns at me, are not so steeped in crime, nor half so guilty before God, as those men who were their instigators, their aiders and abettors. They are the men who are the most guilty before God, and of them will their blood be required.

Elder William W. Phelps said: It becomes necessary on this occasion that you should be acquainted with all the facts in the case. I am knowing myself to most of the facts. Perhaps I have taken a greater interest, and have been better disposed towards Sidney Rigdon than many would suppose under existing circumstances. I have endeavored to be his friend in every situation I could. When I learned he had arrived from Pittsburgh I went to see him, and tried to find out his views and calculations on the subject, but in all his conduct there appeared to be something wrong, a reluctance to communicate. I have had as good a privilege of knowing the whole of Joseph Smith's revelations as any other man, and I know that the Twelve are the first in authority after the First Presidency. Secondly, the Twelve are the Travelling High Council, to regulate all the affairs of all the churches in all the world[38] (D & C 107:23, 33). Now I would ask this congregation, are you willing to throw away this authority for one man? What have you gathered here for? You have gathered here to build up a city; to build up a kingdom, and shall we come up to this time, and then throw away the revelations and all the measures laid down by Brother Joseph? No! Verily no!

[38]See note 22.

There are a few in authority in this place who have been sustaining Sidney Rigdon although the Church voted to sustain the Twelve. I would give them all the advice I am able, to save them; and will read a revelation which was given November 19, 1833.

"Kirtland, November 19, 1833

"And again, blessed be Brother Sidney, also, notwithstanding he shall be high and lifted up, yet he shall bow down under the yoke like unto an ass that croucheth beneath his burthen that learneth his master's will by the stroke of the rod, thus saith the Lord. Yet the Lord will have mercy on him, and he shall bring forth much fruit; even as the vine of the choice grape, when her clusters are ripe, before the time of the gleaning of the vintage; and the Lord shall make his heart merry as with sweet wine, because of him who putteth forth his hand, and lifteth him up out of deep mire, and pointeth him out the way, and guideth his feet when he stumbles, and humbleth him in his pride. Blessed are his generations: nevertheless one shall hunt after them as a man hunteth after an ass that hath strayed in the wilderness, and straightway findeth him and bringeth him into the fold. Thus shall the Lord watch over his generation, that they may be saved; even so, Amen."[39]

Now I want he should be dealt with in justice, but yet with mercy, for I know that what you do here this day, will be sealed in heaven, until the day of redemption (D & C 124:124; 132:26) and it will be impossible to get it off. You will perceive by this prophecy, that all this has to come upon him. He will stumble and be cast into the mire; his family will stray away, & etc. I think enough has been said to make the matter plain to the minds of the people. He has come and lied in the name of the Lord. He has told me two stories. He said he wanted to form an intimacy with the Twelve, but he has never taken one step to do it, but has in every instance endeavored to shun them. The Devil has blinded his eyes, and he has endeavored to blind the minds of the people against those revelations that have been our guide since we came into this Church. Those revelations that said we should build the temple, in order to save ourselves and our dead, and bring to pass those Keys

[39] *Unpublished Revelations* 19:4–8.

and blessings which will secure to ourselves and our posterity the blessings which all, since the days of Adam, had lived and died for. The Lord has said that the Church would be able to judge those who were prophets and those who were not. The first thing Elder Rigdon endeavored to press upon the minds of the people, was the idea that it belonged to some person to rise up and build up the Church to Joseph Smith, but there is no such thing written[40] in the Bible, or the Book of Mormon, or the book of Doctrine and Covenants (3 Nephi 27:2–9). This Church has been built up to Jesus Christ, and Joseph Smith always taught us that there is no other name whereby we can be saved but in and through the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12; 2 Nephi 25:20; 31:21; D & C 18:23).

It is one part of the portion of this people to be tried to the centre, and you will learn to judge men when they come before you. There will be men who cannot endure a celestial law, and consequently, they cannot obtain a celestial glory[41] (D & C 88:22–24; *Unpublished Revelations* 80:14–16). Brother Sidney is endeavoring to draw off a party, and he will be like those who are spoken of in the vision: some for Paul, some for Apollos, some for Cephas, & etc. (1 Cor. 1:12; D & C 76:98–101) and many will have to go to outer darkness and there tarry till they have paid the uttermost farthing. Is there one person here who wishes to barter away a certainty for an uncertainty and go to perdition? *If any man comes to you to lay on hands suddenly (1 Tim. 5:22), don't suffer them to do it, lest ye be deceived. Recollect this — "an Apostle is an Elder" and he has authority to ordain Elders, Priests, & etc. Be wise and lay hands suddenly on no man; neither suffer any one to lay hands suddenly on you.* It takes a majority of any quorum, according to *the order of God*, as declared in the Doctrine and Covenants, (D & C 107:27–29)

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[40]See note 29. Phelps is playing upon the ignorance of the people. Rigdon is addressing the Prophet's doctrine that the faithful Saints would be adopted to him as sons and daughters. For more on this see "Adoption — Law of the Kingdom — Forgotten Doctrine of Mormonism", *Doctrine of the Priesthood*, Vol. 8, No. 4, April 1991, pp. 16–25.

[41]For more on this see: "So You Want Celestial Glory", *Doctrine of the Priesthood*, Vol. 5, No. 3, March, 1988; "Adoption — Law of the Kingdom — Forgotten Doctrine of Mormonism", *Doctrine of the Priesthood*, Vol. 8, No. 4, April 1991, pp. 2–9.

which I hold in my hand, and the common consent of the whole Church, to make any act valid; every ordination, therefore made by Sidney Rigdon, he being one only out of a quorum of three, even if he had not otherwise transgressed, is illegal. I therefore in the authority of the Holy Priesthood, and as one who cannot look upon sin with any degree of allowance, declare his late revelations, and *his extraordinary ordinations of Prophets, Priests and Kings among the Gentiles, holding the Keys of David*[42] — of the Devil; and let all the people say: Amen.

Elder Heber C. Kimball arose and said he was sick and could scarcely speak, but he could not forbear to offer his testimony on this subject: You have already had the testimony of my brethren, and I feel disposed to offer my testimony. I have been in all their councils since they returned home. I was with the brethren at Elder Rigdon's last Tuesday, but I don't know that I can do anything more than confirm what they have said. They have related things as they transpired as near as I can recollect, and I cannot do more than confirm their testimony. As to Elder Rigdon's course there is scarce anyone that can give a relation of it. Elder Rigdon is a man I have always respected as a man, but I have not respected his course for more than five years past. Brethren, I have known his course and was aware of it all the while. When I have gone abroad to preach and have returned again, I would not have the privilege of sleeping, before Brother Joseph would call us to council; and there is not a thing of importance which was ever done, but Brother Joseph counselled with us. *Elder Rigdon after he came from Pittsburgh never attended council only when he could not avoid it. He has no authority only what he receives from the Church.*[43] *If he*

[42]See note 30.

[43]See note 6. Heber C. Kimball is here pointing out that it was within the power of the Saints to elect Rigdon as the President of the Church, but this in itself would not prove that Rigdon either held or presided in the Keys of the Priesthood. In other words, the office of President of the Church is not the presiding office in the Priesthood. President Young explained this doctrine in certain terms at the General Conference of the Church which was held on April 6th, 1853:

"Perhaps it may make some of you stumble, were I to ask you a question — Does a man's being a *Prophet* in this Church prove that he shall be the *President* of it? I answer, no! A man may be a Prophet, Seer, and Revelator, and it may have

was one with us, why was he not in our councils? He was not in the council pertaining to the High Priesthood until just before he started for Pittsburgh.[44] Brother Phelps was the means of bringing him in, but he has not got the same authority as others; *there are more than thirty men who have got higher authority than he has*.[45] Elder Rigdon has intimated that if we opposed him we should have a mob on us — Brethren, if I have to be martyred for the truth, amen to it! If I have to go as Joseph and Hyrum did, it will be a short work. Elder Rigdon has not been in good standing as a counsellor to Brother Joseph for some years. Brother Joseph shook him off at the conference a year ago, he said he would carry him no more; if the Church wanted to carry him they might, but he should not. Joseph said, he had no more authority in his office as counselor. Elder Amasa Lyman was appointed in his stead, and all the power and authority and blessings which Elder Rigdon ever had, was put on the head of Brother Amasa. Brother Hyrum plead to have Elder Rigdon restored, he said try him a little longer, try him another year; Brother Joseph would not receive him again but shook him off. The Church voted to try him again, and *it was the Church that received him and not Brother Joseph*. If Elder Rigdon was in good standing, why has he not been with Brother Joseph in all his councils. He has not acted as a councillor in Brother Joseph's councils for five years,[46] but the Twelve have, they have never forsaken him. *Now when Brother Joseph is gone, he comes and sets us aside*. I have handled with my hands, and have heard with my ears, the things of eternal reality, but I never betrayed Brother Joseph.

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nothing to do with his being the President of the Church. Suffice it to say, that Joseph was the President of the Church, as long as he lived: the people chose to have it so. He always filled that responsible station, by the voice of the people. Can you find any revelation *appointing him* the *President* of the Church? The *keys* of the *Priesthood* were committed to Joseph, to build up the *Kingdom of God* on the *earth*, and were not to be taken from him in time or in eternity; but when he was called to preside over the Church, it was by the voice of the people; though he held the keys of the *Priesthood*, *independent* of their voice." (*JD* 1:133-134; emphasis in original)

[44]See note 17. Kimball here speaks of Rigdon being brought into the Holy Order on May 11th, 1844.

[45]See note 6. Kimball here refers to the fact that Ridgon did not receive his Second Anointing, as did others.

Brethren, as it was in the days of Moses, so it is now. When Moses went into the Holy of Holies, he pulled off his shoes; (Exodus 3:5; Joshua 5:15; Acts 7:33) *Brother Joseph has* passed behind the veil and he pulled off his shoes, and some one else puts them on, until he passes the veil to Brother Joseph. President Young is our president, and our head, and he puts the shoes on first. If Brother Hyrum had remained here, he would have put them on[47] — Hyrum is gone with Joseph and is still his counsellor. The Twelve have received the Keys of the Kingdom and **as long as there is one of them left**, *he will hold them in preference to any one else*.[48] I wish the people would hear and be wise, and those who have been upholding Brother Sidney, would turn about before they go into everlasting despair (Alma 26:19). Here is John C. Bennett, and William and Wilson Law. Robert D. Foster and the Higbees, [they] are all the while seeking to come back and if they cannot accomplish their purposes they will seek to take our lives. We stand forth as the shepherds of the sheep, and we want to lead you into green pastures, that you may be healthy and strong. *There are men here brethren*

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[47] This clearly shows that it was the Prophet's intent for his brother Hyrum to stand in his place at his death and not the quorum of the Twelve. For more on this see note 16.

[48] See note 22. Over the years, this statement has been interpreted in different ways. Generally speaking, it has been understood to mean that any Apostle on Earth would hold the Keys in preference to anyone else, regardless of whether he were one of the Twelve in Joseph's day or not. However, it is obvious that this is not in keeping with the idea that Kimball intended to convey. There were during the Prophet's life time, certain faithful individuals who stood next to him, and these are those of whom Kimball spoke, who stood in line for succession. The Twelve were among these, but certainly they were not the only ones — though it is true, that as of the time of the Prophet's death, the Twelve as a quorum had seniority in service and sacrifice over most all others. It should nevertheless be understood, that the members of the Council of Fifty and Holy Order (among whom the Twelve were only a few) also stood next to the Prophet. As Kimball said, there were more than thirty men who held higher authority than Rigdon (see note 45) but he did not want to mention their names, for the enemy would try to kill them. According to Kimball's statement as given above, these other individuals would have to wait until after the original Twelve who had lived in the Prophet's day were all dead before it would be their time and turn to preside. Wilford Woodruff was the last of the Twelve to die.

who have got authority, but we don't want to mention their names, for the enemy will try to kill them.[49]

President Young arose again and said he wanted to read some testimony which had been presented to him relative to this case, but did not wish to mention the names of the individuals at the present time, if it could be dispensed with. He continued: honest men may be deceived for a time, but they will generally see their error and turn about. There are some who are trolling off and wanting to make divisions amongst us. Brother Sidney says, "if we go to opposing him he will tell all of our secrets!"[50] but I would say, "Oh don't, Brother Sidney! Don't tell our secrets, Oh don't!" But if he tells of our secrets, we will tell of his — tit for tat. He has had long visions in Pittsburgh revealing to him wonderful iniquity amongst the Saints. Now, if he knows of so much iniquity, and has got such wonderful power, why don't he purge it out? He professes to have got "*the Keys of David*"[51] — Wonderful power, and revelations, and he will publish our iniquity! Oh dear, Brother Sidney, don't publish our iniquity! Now don't! John C. Bennett said in his exposure, he knew all of Brother Joseph's secrets, and he would publish them. Joseph H. Jackson, says he has published all Joseph's secrets, but nobody believes their tales, because they lie! And if Sidney Rigdon undertakes to publish all of our secrets, as he says, he will lie the first jump he takes. If Sidney Rigdon knew of all this iniquity why did he not publish it sooner? If there is so much iniquity in this Church, as you talk of, Elder Rigdon, and you have known of it so long, you are a black hearted wretch because you have not published it sooner. If there is not this iniquity you talk of, you are a black hearted wretch, for endeavoring to bring a mob upon us and murder innocent men, women and children! Any man that says the Twelve are bogus makers, or adulterers, or wicked men, is a liar; and all who say such things shall have the fate of liars, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Who is there that has seen

[49]See notes 45, 9, 38. See also "Priesthood and the Law of Succession, A Secret Priesthood, Part 1", *Doctrine of the Priesthood*, Vol. 1 No. 5, 1978 — 2nd edition Sept 1991.

[50]See note 24.

[51]See note 30.

us do such things? No man. The spirit that I am of tramples such slanderous wickedness under my feet. And if they take my life I will go where they cannot hurt me.

Brother Joseph did cast off Sidney, and his power and authority was taken from him, and put upon Amasa Lyman. We told Brother Sidney to come along with us and if he will do this we will build him up. Let him do as Elder Amasa Lyman has done. Now we don't expect ever to move without revelation and they that have the Keys of the Kingdom can get revelation. If anything would make me fight it would be to hear anyone heap charges on Brother Joseph who is dead. They cannot let the dead alone so great is their corruption and wickedness.

Here is another secret leaked out of their secret meetings. They say the man of sin spoken of in the revelations, is the Twelve. (2 Thes 2:3) A pretty large man I should say. Now this is the testimony we present before this council to know if we are to fellowship Elder Rigdon any longer.

I shall now wait and see if there is anyone to produce testimony in favor of the opposite side of the question.

President William Marks arose and said he felt disposed to say a few words in defence of Elder Rigdon. There has been a strong team against him. They all seem to speak against him and there is nothing said in his favor. I feel to take up the opposite side of the question and say something in his defence, for I have always been a friend to Elder Rigdon. It has always been the case before this High Council, that there are two sides to the question (D & C 102:15); there are some to speak in favor of the accused, but there seems to be only one side to this subject. There has been many things said which I know nothing about.[52] But as it has always been the case before the High Council that some should speak in the defence of the accused, I feel to volunteer to speak in his behalf. It is no more

[52]In his diary entry for August 7th, 1844, William Clayton wrote that "Brother [Alpheus] Cutler said that in the council yesterday he drew out from Marks that Sidney Rigdon was to be president and Marks patriarch." ("The Nauvoo Diaries and Writings of William Clayton", to be published in forthcoming issue of *Doctrine of the Priesthood*) This being the case, surely at least to some degree, Marks was aware of Rigdon's intentions and doings.

than right that both sides should be represented — I don't wish to justify any man in an error, but there is a trial before this Church and Council. In regard to his character there has been many things said which appear to be objectionable, but I can do *some of them* away. I hear objections to his authority, and to his conduct for four or five years past. There were charges brought before the conference, last fall, and one or two days spent in hearing of them, and it seemed to me, that every exertion was made that could be made, to criminate him and cut him off. There was time given to bring all the charges that could be got at, but there was not a single particle of the charges sustained, if I recollect right, as to proving him guilty of committing any of the acts specified in the charges.[53] Now I think if Brother Rigdon was restored at that time we ought not to go beyond the conference to fetch up charges today; but here are charges fetched up for years back. It is known that he was restored to full faith and fellowship last fall. I have heard Brother Joseph say repeatedly since that time, that all things was right between them.[54] Just before Elder Rigdon left here I heard Brother Joseph say that all things were right between them. Sister Emma had a good many feelings against Elder Rigdon, but they are all done away. She has said within a few months, and in fact within one week, that she was on as good terms with Elder Rigdon as she had ever been since he was a member of the Church.[55]

As respects his not presenting his vision or revelation before the *First Quorum*,[56] I can say, that Elder Rigdon *did not know that this order was introduced. Brother Joseph told us that he, for the future whenever there was a revelation to be presented to the Church he should first present it to that quorum, and then if it passed the First Quorum, it should be presented to the Church. But Brother Rigdon*

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[53]See Appendix A. See also note 54 and text between notes 61–65.

[54]See Appendix A. See also note 63.

[55]For a concise treatment on this subject, see "The Matriarchal Priestesshood and Emma's Right to Succession as Presiding High Priestess and Queen", *Doctrine of the Priesthood* Vol. 8, No. 3, March 1991.

[56]See note 8.

did not know this, for he was only just brought into the Quorum before he left to go to Pittsburgh.[57]

There have been many things said of his course since he came from Pittsburgh which I know nothing of, as to his wishing to lead this people, I don't know anything about it. And as to his revelations being from the Devil, I am sure I don't know whether they are from God or the Devil. The Twelve and the High Council both know that my mind differs from theirs respecting the organization. I had always been taught that the First Presidency would remain and always be with the Church. I had always understood that the Church would be imperfect without a quorum of three to stand as a First Presidency, and I cannot find any law to say that this quorum should ever be dropped[58] (D & C 107:2–22, 65–66). *I laid my hands on Brother Sidney with Brother Joseph and he ordained him to be a "Prophet and a Seer and Revelator," and to be equal with him in holding the Keys and Authority of this Kingdom* (D&C 90:6). I have known this for two years, and according to my understanding he has not lost it through transgression. I still feel that he is a member of the quorum of the First Presidency, and I always expected that the quorum would be filled up the same as at the commencement. I always felt that there was a power and responsibility in that quorum which did not exist anywhere else. I will read an extract from the 84th section of the book of Doctrine and Covenants: "Verily I say unto you, the Keys of this Kingdom shall never be taken from you, while thou art in the world, neither in the world to come: nevertheless, through you shall the oracles be given to another" (D & C 90:3–4). This is what I ever supposed would be the case that through him the oracles should be given to another who should be a Prophet, and a Seer and Revelator, and through him to the Church. I have always felt since last special conference that the order was not ac-

[57]See notes 8, 17. Rigdon was brought into the Council of Fifty on March 19th, 1844 ("The Nauvoo Diaries and Writings of William Clayton", March 19th, 1844, to be published in a future issue of *Doctrine of the Priesthood*) and into the Holy Order on May 11th, 1844 (Joseph Smith Diary, May 11th, 1844).

[58]Years later President Young made a similar statement, but not before it became timely and feasible for him to reorganize the First Presidency with himself as the President. For more on this see Appendix C. See also note 67.

cording to this pattern. Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams were appointed to stand equal with Joseph in this Kingdom (D & C 90:6); and I always supposed that one would receive the oracles from Joseph and give them to the Church. Now brethren, I have searched diligently to get at the right of the matter, and I know I am honest and wish to know how it should be.

I will read another extract from the Doctrine and Covenants, which you will find on the ninety-sixth page. I never supposed that this quorum could be disorganized while their was one or two left. I have ever felt that Elder Rigdon sustains his authority; I never believed he had lost it through transgression; I believe he is the man to receive the oracles from Brother Joseph and give them to the Church (D&C 90:3–6); all I want is to have the thing right, and when I believe it is right, I am as ready to confess it as any other man. (Read several extracts from D & C 102:9–11):

["The president of the church, who is also the president of the council [i.e. the High Council of the Church], is appointed by revelation, and acknowledged in his administration by the voice of the church. And it is according to the dignity of his office that he should preside over the council of the church [i.e. the High Council of the Church, see D&C 102] ; and it is his privilege to be assisted by two other presidents, appointed after the same manner that he himself was appointed. And in case of the absence of one or both of those who are appointed to assist him, he has power to preside over the council without an assistant; *and in case he himself is absent, the other presidents have power to preside in his stead,* ***both or either of them***. (D&C 102:9–11)]

When this organization is broken up there is a quorum broken up which is of great power and authority, and I always thought it ought to have been continued. The Church has always supposed that the Twelve were to bear the gospel to all the world (107:23, 33), and when they are absent, who will preside over the Church? (D & C 126:1–3) We know that it is necessary for individuals to preside over the whole Church. Now, we are losing this office and power and authority, but I feel as though we don't want to lose anything. I feel that we ought to keep up the organization, if it is right to do so.

When Elder Rigdon first came from Pittsburgh he said it was his place to receive the oracles, but there was a delicacy in Brother Rigdon in presenting his claims to the people; he supposed there would have been some individuals who would have taken up the case. It appears from what has been stated this morning, that questions have been put which seems to bring a contradiction. If Elder Rigdon has done anything worthy of being severed from the Church, I feel to go with the Church, and to be satisfied with what they do. I don't know that I can see anything worthy of cutting him off at the present time.[59] Probably I am prejudiced in his favor; if it is wrong I hope the brethren will forgive me. When I have set with the High Council I have always tried to divest myself of prejudice. I am willing that the High Council and Church should act on his case, if they think best. I felt as though there was a great many men here who were saying hard things against him and nobody to speak a word for him, and I have volunteered to say a few words in his defense.

I have had a conversation with Elder Rigdon and I cannot find that he has committed a crime. The Church has never cut off any person without a crime was proven against him. Now is there a man in the Church who has received the ordination of a *Prophet, Seer and Revelator?* If there is I want to see him. *There has men been ordained Prophets, Priests and Kings,* but I have never heard of anyone being ordained a *Seer and Revelator.*[60] *I think I am know-*

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[59]Marks is not being altogether honest in his remarks. Having been a member of the Holy Order from its beginning in 1842, he well knew that Rigdon had not yet received all the ordinances and Keys of the Priesthood; that he was not by any means the presiding head of the Holy Order after the Prophet's death; and that the performing of the ordinances of the Temple required authority in order for them to be valid.

[60]See notes 36, 62. Marks would have the Saints believe that the Apostles were not Prophets, Seers and Revelators, but this is not in accordance with the Prophet's doctrine. At the Dedication of the Kirtland Temple, which commenced on March 27th, 1836, both the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve were sustained by the assembled Saints as "Prophets and Seers":

"I [Joseph Smith] then made a short address, and called upon the several quorums, and all the congregation of saints to acknowledge the Presidency as ***Prophets and Seers***, and uphold them by their prayers, they all covenanted to do so by rising; I

then called upon the quorums and congregation of saints to acknowledge the **12 Apostles** who were present as ***Prophets and Seers*** and special witnesses ***to all the nations of the earth***, *holding* ***the keys of the kingdom***, to unlock it or cause it to be done among ~~all nations~~ them; and uphold them by their prayers, which they assented to by rising." (*The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 1st ed. 173)

When the *History of the Church* was finally published, during the administration of President Young, the above statement was embellished, so that it said that the Twelve were sustained as "Prophets, Seers" and "Revelators" (*History of the Church* 2:417; *TPJS* 109). However, the statement regarding the First Presidency being sustained only as "Prophets and Seers" remains unchanged, which gives the impression that the Twelve were sustained in more dignity by being designated as "Revelators" while the First Presidency were not. In all probability, the word "Revelators" as it relates to the Twelve was added to the History after the Prophet's death, under the direction of President Young.

From all the facts, it is evident that Marks is here playing upon the ignorance of the People. He had himself been a member of the Holy Order from the beginning, and was among the first to receive his Second Anointing. This being the case, no doubt, he was well aware of the Prophet's doctrine — namely that the Priesthood authority given in the Second Anointing is the highest authority that one mortal can confer upon another, and that it stood as God to give laws to the People (*TPJS* 322). As of July 23rd, 1843, the Prophet himself had already for years been the President of the Church as well as a Prophet, Seer, and Revelator, and yet on this day he spoke to the Saints of himself being "advanced" in the Priesthood, from the office of President of the Church to that of Priest and King over the Kingdom (See note 36; *TPJS* 318; *WJS* 234). On may 4th, 1842, when the Prophet first revealed the Endowment, and ordained men "Kings and Priests", thereby conferring on them "Patriarchal Priesthood" (see the Diaries and Writings of Bishop George Miller, footnotes 16–21, to be published in forthcoming issue of *Doctrine of the Priesthood*), he referred to this Priesthood as the "Highest Order of the Melchizedek Priesthood" (*History of the Church*, 5:1; *TPJS* 237). Again on September 28th, 1843, when the Prophet received his Second Anointing, Willard Richards wrote the following in the Prophet's diary:

"Baurak Ale [i.e. Joseph Smith] was by common consent & unanimous voice chosen president of the Quorum and anointed and ordained to the ***highest & holiest order of the priesthood*** (& companion [i.e. Emma])" (Joseph Smith Diary, Church Historian's Office)

Willard Richards recorded the events of the day somewhat differently in his personal diary:

"The council met over the store also at 7 o Clock in the Evening met in an upper room in the mansion. . . . . Joseph Smith led in prayer he prayed that his days might be lengthened & all the _____ Then by common consent Joseph Smith the Prophet Received his second Anointing of the Highest & Holiest order" (Willard Richards Diary, September 28th, 1843, Church Historian's Office)

ing to all the ordinations, but I don't know of a man who has been ordained to the office and calling Brother Sidney has; and if he is cut off, *who will we have to obtain revelations?*[61] A man must be in possession of this power to be able to ordain a Prophet, and a Seer and a Revelator. If there is a man ordained to lead this people, I do not know it. I don't believe there are sufficient revelations given to lead this people, and I am fully of the belief that this people cannot build up the Kingdom except it is done by revelation.

President Young arose and replied: I feel it a duty to make some remarks in reply to what Brother Marks has said with regard to Brother Rigdon's character. I have not been beyond the last fall conference to fetch evidence. There was enough brought forward at the conference, and abundance more could have been presented, but Brother Hyrum plead so hard it was kept back. Brother Rigdon did enough when he came from Missouri, to cut him off from the Priesthood. He said he never would follow Brother Joseph's revelations any more, contrary to his own convenience. He said Jesus Christ was a fool to him in sufferings; was this not enough to cut him off? There was enough to cut him off long ago, but Brother Marks has endeavored to soft soap the people. I have known that

[61] Evidently, there were those among the Saints who would be influenced by the above statement of William Marks for years yet to come. That this is so is indicated by the fact that even as late as August 15th, 1847, we find President Young taking great pains to refute it:

"When Brother Joseph received the Priesthood he did not receive all at once but he was a Prophet, Seer and Revelator before he received the Fulness of the Priesthood and Keys of the Kingdom. . . . .

Some have had fears that we had not power to get revelations since the death of Joseph. But I want this subject from this time forth to be forever set at rest and I want this Church to understand from this day henceforth and forever that an Apostle is the highest office and authority that there is in the Church and Kingdom of God on the Earth. From whom did Joseph receive his authority? From just such men as sit around me here (pointing to the Twelve Apostles that sat with him). Peter, James and John were Apostles and there was no noise about their being seers and revelators though those gifts were among them. Joseph Smith gave unto me and my brethren, the Twelve, all the Priesthood, Keys, Power and Authority which he had and those are powers which belong to the apostleship." (TPBY 2:8/15/47; For another similar statement, see President Young's October 6th, 1844 discourse, published in *Times and Seasons* Vol. 5: (Oct. 15, 1844) 683)

Brother Marks "had no evidence but the written word;" But if this people have no evidence but the written word, it is quite time to go to the river and be baptised for the remission of their sins. Who cannot see that Elder Rigdon would sacrifice this people? *Brother Marks says, if there are any ordained to offices equal with Elder Rigdon he don't know it. He don't know all the ordinations, nor he won't till he knows something more than the written word.*[62]

I know the reason why Brother Joseph said all was right between him and Elder Rigdon; he (Rigdon) was whining all the while because of his sufferings. He wanted to go back to Kirtland. Brother Hyrum went to Brother Joseph and plead with him again, and begged of Joseph to "bless him — hold on to him, for I believe he will yet straighten out," *and he finally got him ordained.*[63] But did he help Brother Joseph after this? No. There was then another revelation given for him to move his family near to Brother Joseph (D & C 124:105). He finally did, but did he then go to Brother Joseph and assist him in his councils? He did not.

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[62]See notes 66, 60. No doubt, President Young is referring to the secret ordinances and Priesthood which were introduced by the Prophet Joseph Smith to the members of the Holy Order and Council of Fifty. On one occasion the Prophet Joseph Smith made a similar statement to that given above:

"There are many things which belong to the powers of the Priesthood and the keys thereof, that have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world; they are hid from the wise and prudent to be revealed in the last times." (*History of the Church* 4:209–210)

For more on this subject see "Priesthood and the Law of Succession, Part 1, a Secret Priesthood", *Doctrine of the Priesthood*, Vol. 1 No. 5, 1978 — 2nd edition Sept 1991.

[63]See appendix A and B. See also notes 44, 45, 57, 6, 54. Probably President Young here refers to the ordination which Rigdon received when he was brought into the Holy Order and received his Endowment. For more on this see "The Nauvoo Doctrine on Priesthood in Light of Alma Chapter 13", *Doctrine of the Priesthood*, Vol. 3 No. 2 Dec 1986; see also "The Diaries and Writings of Bishop George Miller", footnotes 16–21, to be published in a forthcoming issue of *Doctrine of the Priesthood*. What ever Priesthood Rigdon may have obtained when he received his Endowment, his anointing as a King and Priest was not sealed for Eternity, nor did he receive the Sealing Keys of Elijah. In other words, Rigdon received his Endowment, but he never did receive his Second Anointing.

If I had the same feelings towards this people that Elder Rigdon and some others have I should hope you would cast us off today. Elder Rigdon is now preaching secretly to the people, to have them go back to Pittsburgh — go back to the "leeks and onions." He has prophesied in the name of God that we won't build this temple. As has been previously stated, *Elder Rigdon was not in our councils before he went away.*[64] But, Brother Hyrum used to go and see him, and labor with him, and Sidney would make great promises, which would cause Hyrum to come and plead with Joseph again, and say, "Brother Joseph bless him, he will come back" & etc. He is going contrary to Joseph's instructions, and he shall not lead the innocent to destruction; I say it in the name of Israel's God. His orders were to go to Pittsburgh and build up a Kingdom, but he was positively prohibited from taking anyone with him from this place,[65] but, now he wants to divide the people and take them somewhere, to the mountains near Pittsburgh. Elder Rigdon can go to Carthage, and to Warsaw, and he is in no danger from the mob; but can a prophet of God go there with safety? No, he cannot. If I was to lay down my authority in this Church, they would soon say, Mr. Young how do you do, *I approve of your course*. As to Elder Rigdon's revelations, they are from the same source as Oliver Olney's, Gladden Bishop, Mr. Strang's, & etc. They are from the Devil. John C. Bennett passed up the river last Tuesday, and called at the upper landing. He sent a messenger to Elder Rigdon and wished to see him, and Elder Rigdon would have gone had not a Mr. Lawrence, (who professes no kind of religion) rebuked him. If you make Sidney Rigdon your President and leader, you will soon have John C. Bennett here, with the Laws and Fosters and all the murderous clan. Elder Rigdon was the prime cause of our troubles in Missouri, by his fourth of July oration. He is liable to be deceived and has already been deceived. *As to a person not knowing more than the written word, let me tell you that there are Keys that the written word never spoke of, nor never will.*[66]

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[64]See note 17.
[65]See notes 29, 11.
[66]See notes 30, 13.

All I ask of men or women to do, is if they believe in Sidney Rigdon and want him to lead them, I want they should be bold enough to go with him, and not say they want to tarry with the Church. They say they believe in Joseph Smith, and at the same time all their operations are to destroy and tear down what he has built up.

Elder Parley P. Pratt briefly referred the people to the plea of Elder Marks: "that he did not know anything to cut Elder Rigdon off." He referred the people to the testimony before them concerning his revelation to destroy this people and yet he has not done enough for Elder Marks.

Elder William W. Phelps read from the same revelation which was first read by Elder Marks, he read the same Elder Marks did, and added, "*even to the Church*" (D & C 90:4; 107:65) which Elder Marks omitted to read.

[Therefore, thou art blessed from henceforth that bear the keys of the kingdom given unto you; which kingdom is coming forth for the last time. Verily I say unto you, the keys of this kingdom shall never be taken from you, while thou art in the world, neither in the world to come; Nevertheless, through shall the oracles be given to another, yea, even unto the church. (D&C 90:2–4)]

He [Phelps] also referred to the other quotations by Elder Marks, plainly showing that they were not to the point. He read from new edition, page 414. He said Brother Marks apologized for Elder Rigdon, inasmuch as he did not know where to present his revelation, but Elder Marks knew and he could have told Elder Rigdon; it looks a little like "nimble practice." As to the instructions pertaining to the First Presidency, they will be explained hereafter.[67]

Elder Marks arose to reply to the charge of his having given out the appointment to choose a guardian at Elder Rigdon's request. He said he did not understand the object of the meeting when he gave out the appointment.

Elder Hyde stated that a short time before the difficulties, President Joseph Smith in one of their councils, told the Twelve

[67]See notes 58, 8.

that *he had given them all the Keys and ordinances which had been committed to him*.[68]

At this stage of the business there was a call for the question, from many parts of the congregation, whereupon, President Young without further ceremony submitted the case to Bishop Whitney and the High Council.

The Bishop gave a privilege to the High Council to offer any remarks they thought proper; but, no one attempting to speak, he said he might give a relation of Elder Rigdon's history for near twenty years past, but I deem it unnecessary. I have had some conversation with Elder Rigdon since he returned from Pittsburgh. I have also been present when others conversed with him; but, I am to decide on the testimony as it has been presented. I was well acquainted with Elder Rigdon a number of years before he came into this Church. I never had any confidence in Brother Sidney as a Revelator, and why? Because I have so repeatedly heard Brother Joseph rebuke him for speaking in the name of the Lord, what was not so. He was always either in the bottom of the cellar or up in the garret window. At the time his license was taken in Kirtland he was more sanguine than he is now. The people were excited very much at that time, Brother Joseph was away, and when he returned and learned what Sidney had been doing, he took him into council, told him to give up his license to the Bishop, and divest himself of all the authority he could, for, said he, the less authority you have the better it will be for you. It has been repeatedly the case when he has been speaking to the Church that Joseph has rebuked him for it. The Bishop then briefly referred to Elder Mark's objection to our fetching testimony beyond the conference, & etc., and then continued: I feel that Brother Rigdon came here with a bad spirit, and has delivered a revelation. If such things as are contained in his revelation, have been revealed to him, it is from a source with which we want nothing to do. When he first came here I thought he was deceived, but since last Tuesday evening, I have been convinced that he is dishonest. He made many evasive replies to the interrogatories of the Twelve, and I think his calculation is to scatter this people,

[68]See notes 9, 22.

because his theory comes in opposition to President Joseph Smith's revelations. It has been proved that he prophesied that we should not build this Temple, I believe he is an evil designing man. He is dishonest, and he has lied to carry out his theory. He preached one thing one day and the contrary another. He did not reconcile his preaching to me. I asked him to reconcile it, but he did not do it. I feel to sustain the Twelve in withdrawing their fellowship, and I think the High Council and the Church ought to sustain the decision of the Twelve. He concluded by calling upon the High Council to manifest if they were satisfied with his decision, and the vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Elder Hyde arose and said he was not satisfied with the motion; it is not explicit enough.

Elder William W. Phelps arose and offered a motion, that Elder Sidney Rigdon be cut off from the Church, and delivered over to the buffetings of Satan until he repents (D & C 78:12; 82:21; 104:9-10; 132:26; 1 Cor. 12:7).

Bishop Whitney then presented the motion to the High Council, and the vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Elder William W. Phelps then offered the same motion to the Church, upon which President Young arose and requested the congregation to place themselves so that they could see all who voted. We want to know who goes for Sidney and who are for the Twelve. He then called upon the Church to signify whether they were in favor of the motion. *The vote was unanimous, excepting a few of Elder Rigdon's party, numbering about ten.*

He then requested those who were for Sidney Rigdon to manifest it, and as before stated there were about ten.

Elder Phelps then motioned, that all who have voted to follow Elder Rigdon should be suspended until they can have a trial before the High Council.

An amendment was offered, as follows: "or shall hereafter be found advocating his principles."

The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Elder Young arose and delivered Sidney Rigdon over to the buffetings of Satan, in the name of the Lord, and all the people said, amen.

Elder Hyde motioned that James Emmett and Zachariah Wilson, and those who go with them, shall be disfellowshipped, until they repent, but at the request of Elder Young the motion was withdrawn.

Elder Hyde again rose and stated that Elder Samuel James had promised to preach a funeral sermon at the request of President Young. He came at the time appointed and preached anything but a funeral sermon, and after he got through he said, if Brigham Young wanted a funeral sermon preached, he might preach it himself. He considered that this was unchristian like conduct, and he moved that Samuel James be disfellowshipped from the Church. The vote was unanimous.

He further said, whereas Jared Carter has gone on some mission, contrary to council, under the new revelation, I move that fellowship be withdrawn from him, and that it be published in the next *Neighbor* and *Times and Seasons*. The vote was unanimous.

Elder Amasa Lyman motioned that Samuel Bennett be cut off from the Church, *for having received a false ordination*. The vote was unanimous.

Elder Lyman motioned that Leonard Soby be cut off *for the same cause*, with Samuel Bennett. The vote was unanimous.

It was motioned and seconded, that Joseph H. Newton, be cut off from the church. The vote was unanimous.

It was motioned and seconded that John A. Forgeus be cut off from the Church. The vote was unanimous.

It was motioned and seconded, that *President Marks*, express his feelings at the proceedings of this meeting.

He arose and said he was willing to be satisfied with the action of the Church on the case.

Resolved, that these minutes be published in the *Neighbor* and *Times and Seasons*.

At 4 o'clock P. M. the meeting dismissed with a blessing from Elder William W. Phelps. (*Times and Seasons* Vol. 5:(Sept 15, 1844) 647–655: (Oct 1st, 1844) 660–667: (Oct 15th, 1844) 685–687)

Appendix A

The following is a concise documented summation of the relationship which existed between Rigdon and the Prophet during the last year of the Prophet's life:

William Clayton Diary, Sunday, August 13th, 1843:

[. . .] Went to meeting heard J[oseph] preach on 2 Peter 3. 10 & 11 — being a funeral sermon on the death of E[lias] Higbee. . . . . He then showed that Sidney Rigdon had bound himself by an oath to Governor Carlin to deliver J[oseph] into the hands of the Missourians if he could & finally in the name of the Lord withdrew the hand of fellowship from him & put it to the vote of the people. He was cut off by an unanimous vote & orders to demand his license. . . . ("The Nauvoo Diaries And Writings of William Clayton", August 13th, 1843, to be published in a forthcoming issue of *Doctrine of the Priesthood*)

The Prophet's diary which was kept by Willard Richards, gives a more complete account of the remarks which the Prophet made on this occasion. The following is a typescript of Richards account. The words in braces were added years later when it was finally published in the *History of the Church*:

closed 20 mi.— 3—
returned and said he had forgotten one thing. we have had certain traders in this city who have been writing falsehoods to Missouri.. there is a certain man in this city who has made a covenant to betray and give me up {to the Missourians}. and that too before Gov{.} Carlin commenced his persecution{s}. {That man is no other than Sidney Rigdon.} this testimony I have from gentlemen from a broad— and I do not wish to give their names. Sidney Rigdon. I most solemnly proclaim the withdrawal of my fellowship from this man—^/that the judging be true on the condition/ and let the Saints proclaim it abroad. that he may no longer be acknowledged as my counselor and that all who feel to sanction my proceedings—& views will manifest it by uplifted hands. & it was a unanimous vote that Sidney Rigdon be disfellow{shipp}ed and his license demanded.— (Joseph Smith Diary, August 13, 1843; see also *The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith* 406; *The History of the Church* 5:531–532)

On the 16th of August Willard Richards again mentions Sidney Rigdon in the Prophet's diary. Writing in the first person on behalf of the Prophet he stated:

I gave Esqur Adams S. Rigdons affidavit to carry to Gov Ford

The *History of the Church* again mentions the Rigdon problem the following Sunday on August 20th:

Sunday. 20 — I was at home all day. My brother Hyrum preached at the stand, and Sidney Rigdon read a copy of a letter to show the people that he was not guilty of treachery. (*HC* 5:538)

The following Sunday, on August 27th, the Rigdon affair was again discussed by the Prophet in the fore part of his discourse on Priesthood:

[At] 10 A.M. [a] meeting [commenced] at the Temple Grove, President Marks prayed —

Joseph said 2 weeks ago today something was said about Elder Sidney Rigdon, and a vote was taken to take away his license, on account of a report brought by elder Hyde from Quincy — [A letter has since been produced by Governor Carlin in an effort to deny these charges.] The letter is one of the most evasive things — and carries with it a design to hide the truth. [The Prophet] then read [the] letter from Thomas Carlin to Sidney Rigdon as follows:

Quincy Ill. Aug. 18, 1843.

DEAR SIR: — Yours of the 15th instant was received, but not in time to answer it by return mail. You say that a Mr. Orson Hyde, on board of the steamboat Anawan a short time since, was told by an officer of the boat that a Mr. Prentice, in the vicinity of Quincy, said that some person in high standing in the Church of Latter-day Saints in this place (Quincy) had an interview with you (me [i.e. Thomas Carlin]) said he would use all the influence that his circumstances would admit of to have Joseph Smith arrested and delivered into the hands of the Missourians, & c. This interview is said to have taken place at the time the first warrant was issued against Smith, and since the last warrant was issued, that the same person had written to you, (me [i.e. Thomas Carlin]) or had an interview with you [i.e. Thomas Carlin], giving the same assurances. It has been publicly said in this town that I (Sidney Rigdon) was the person who had this interview or interviews

and correspondence with you [i.e. Thomas Carlin]. Now sir, it gives me [i.e. Thomas Carlin] pleasure to be perfectly able to disabuse you, I have not seen you to my recollection, nor had any correspondence with you, until the present, since 1839; and in all the intercourse I have had with you I have always looked upon you as one of the most devoted followers of Joseph Smith and one of the pillars of the Church of Latter-day Saints. I never sought through the aid of any person to entrap Joseph Smith. A faithful discharge of my official duties was all that I attempted or desired.

Very respectfully
Your obedient servant
THOMAS CARLIN.

[This letter was sent] in answer to Sidney Rigdon's [letter] of the 15th Inst. — Thomas Carlin [asks] "Has any man been concerned in a conspiracy to deliver Joseph Smith to Missouri? — If so who? —"

After reading [the] letter from Thomas Carlin to Sidney Rigdon and making some remarks about it, President Joseph [Smith] read [and then] preached [from] the 7th Chapter of Hebrews" (New Amalgamated Text of Joseph Smith's August 27th, 1843 Discourse, see forthcoming issue of *Doctrine of the Priesthood*; also *History of the Church* 5:554–556; *WJS* 243–248)

It would appear that immediately after the Prophet's speech Sidney Rigdon either approached the Prophet in private or came to the stand to deny the charges which had been made against him, for Willard Richards continued with the following entry in the Prophet's diary:

Sidney Rigdon never see gov. Carlin but 3 times. never exchanged a word with any man living on this subject. I ask pardon for having done any thing which should give a reason to make you think so.— (Diary of Joseph Smith August 27th, 1843)

Following this the Prophet's activities for the evening are recorded, at the end of which is a copy of the above quoted letter which was written into the Prophet's diary. But after this, the Rigdon affair is not mentioned again until October 6th, which was the day when the special conference was to convene. However due to bad weather it was postponed until a better day. The following is recorded in the Prophet's diary:

Friday October 6."

To special conference 11 1/2 [A.M.] — so cold & windy [only a] few people [came] out [for meeting. I] gave notice President Rigdons case

would be considered. — — &c adjourned [until] to morrow [at] 10 or 1st pleasant day. . . . . .

Saturday Oct. ~~6~~ 7th 1843

attended conference see minutes on case of S[idney] Rigdon. [The remainder of the page is blank] (Diary of Joseph Smith, October 6th and 7th, 1843; see also *The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith* 417–418)

The minutes of the Conference were Published in a back dated issue of the Times and Seasons, under date of September 15th, 1843:

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL CONFERENCE
Of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day
Saints, held in the City of Nauvoo, commencing
on the 6th of October, 1843

Friday, October 6th, 10 o'clock A.M.

The weather proving unfavorable, the organization of the conference was postponed until the next day at 10 o'clock A.M.

Saturday, 10 o'clock A.M.

Conference assembled and proceeded to business.

President Joseph Smith was called to the chair, and Gustavus Hills chosen clerk.

Opened with singing by the choir, and prayer by elder Almon Babbitt.

The president stated the items of business to be brought before the Conference, to be,

1st. The case and standing of elder Sidney Rigdon, counsellor to the First Presidency.

2nd. The further progress of the Temple; after which, any miscellaneous business.

Elder Sidney Rigdon addressed the conference on the subject of his situation and circumstances among the saints.

President Joseph Smith addressed the conference, inviting an expression of any charges or complaints which the Conference had to make. He stated his dissatisfaction with elder Sidney Rigdon as a counsellor, not having received any material benefit from his labors or counsels since their escape from Missouri. Several complaints were then brought forward in reference to his management in the Post Office; a supposed correspondence and connection with John C. Bennett, with Ex-Governor Carlin, and with the

Missourians, of a treacherous character; also his leaguing with dishonest persons in endeavoring to defraud the innocent.

It is likely that at least part of the Prophet's suspicion of Rigdon corresponding with John C. Bennett[69] is founded in the fact that Bennett ended up in possession of a letter which the Prophet wrote to Rigdon's daughter Nancy, in the spring of 1842. The letter was written in the hopes of persuading Nancy to become the Prophet's plural wife. Rigdons daughter rejected both the Prophet's proposal and the principle of plural marriage, and the whole affair commenced a cold war between Rigdon and the Prophet. Ultimately the letter ended up in the hands of John C. Bennett, who first had it published in the *Sangamo Journal* at Springfield, Illinois, on August 19th, 1842, and then again later that year in Bennett's book: *The History of the Saints: An Expose of Joe Smith and Mormonism* (Boston, 1842), pp. 243, 244). Under the circumstances, it would be difficult for the Prophet not to suspect that Sidney Rigdon had given the letter to Bennett, with the intent of defaming his character.

[Conference minutes continue:] President Joseph Smith related to the Conference the detention of documents from J. Butterfield, Esq., which were designed for the benefit of himself, (President Smith,) but was not handed over for some three or four weeks, greatly to his disadvantage. Also, an indirect testimony from Missouri, through the mother of Orin P. Rockwell, that said Rigdon and others had given information, by letter, of President Smiths' visit to Dixon, advising them to proceed to that place and arrest him there. He stated that in consequence of those, and other circumstances, and his unprofitableness to him as a counsellor, he did not wish to retain him in that station, *unless those difficulties could be removed*; but desired his salvation, and expressed his willingness that he should retain a place among the saints.

Elder Almon Babbitt suggested the propriety of limiting the complaints and proofs to circumstances that had transpired since the last Conference.

President Joseph Smith replied, and showed the legality and propriety of a thorough investigation, without such limitation.

Elder Sidney Rigdon plead, concerning the documents from J. Butterfield, Esq., that he received it in answer to some inquiries which he had transmitted to him — that he received it at a time when he was sick, and unable to examine it — did not know that it was designed for the perusal and benefit of President Joseph Smith — that he had, consequently, ordered

[69]See note 25.

it to be laid aside, where it remained until inquired for by Joseph Smith. He had never written to Missouri concerning the visit of Joseph Smith to Dixon, and knew of no other person having done so. That, concerning certain rumors of belligerent operations under Governor Carlin's administration, he had related them, not to alarm or disturb any one, but that he had the rumors from good authorities, and supposed them well founded. That he had never received but one communication from John C. Bennett, and that of a business character, except one addressed to him conjointly with Elder Orson Pratt, which he handed over to President Smith — that he had never written any letters to John C. Bennett.

The weather becoming inclement, Conference adjourned until Sunday 10 o'clock A.M.

Sunday, 8th inst., 10 o'clock, A.M.

Conference assembled agreeably to adjournment, and opened with singing by the choir, and prayer by Elder William W. Phelps.

Elder Sidney Rigdon resumed his plea of defence. He related the circumstances of his reception in the city of Quincy, after his escape from Missouri — the cause of his delay in not going to the city of Washington, on an express to which he had been appointed — and closed with a moving appeal to President Joseph Smith concerning their former friendship, associations and sufferings, and expressed his willingness to resign his place, though with sorrowful and indescribable feelings. *During this address, the sympathies of the congregation were highly excited.*

Elder Almon Babbitt related a conversation he had had with Esq. Johnson, in which he exonerated elder Sidney Rigdon from the charge or suspicion of having had a treacherous correspondence with Ex-Governor Carlin.

President Joseph Smith arose and satisfactorily explained to the congregation the supposed treacherous correspondence with Ex-Governor Carlin, which wholly removed suspicion from elder Sidney Rigdon, and from every other person. He expressed entire willingness to have elder Sidney Rigdon retain his station, *provided he would magnify his office*, and walk and conduct himself in all honesty, righteousness, and integrity; *but signified his lack of confidence in his integrity and steadfastness, judging from their past intercourse*.

Years later when these minutes were finally published in the *History of the Church*, the above paragraph was substantially altered to be more negative where it concerned Rigdon's future standing as the Prophet's councillor. The following is the way it was finally published in the *History of the Church*:

President Joseph Smith arose and explained to the congregation the supposed treacherous correspondence with ex-Governor Carlin, and expressed entire lack of confidence in his integrity and steadfastness, judging from their past intercourse. (*HC* 6:49)

[Conference minutes continue:] President Hyrum Smith followed with appropriate and expressive remarks on the attribute of mercy in God, as that by which He influences, controls, and conquers — and the propriety and importance of the saint's exercising the same attribute towards their fellows; and especially towards their aged companion and fellow servant in the cause of truth and righteousness.

Elder Almon Babbitt and pres't Wm. Law followed with remarks in defence of elder Sidney Rigdon.

On motion by President William Marks, and seconded by President Hyrum Smith, conference voted that elder Sidney Rigdon be permitted to retain his station as Counsellor to the First Presidency.

Singing by the choir — prayer by pres't. Wm. Law.

Conference adjourned for one hour. (*Times and Seasons* Vol. 4 (No. 21, September 15, 1843) 329–330)

Years later when these minutes were finally included in the Manuscript History, (preparatory to their being published in the *History of the Church*) there was another paragraph which was added at this point as a footnote. However, when B. H. Roberts finally published the annotated *History of the Church*, this footnote was added into the text directly below the above asterisk. The following short paragraph is the added statement:

President Joseph Smith arose and said, 'I have thrown him off my shoulders, and you have again put him on me. You may carry him, but I will not. (*HC* 6:49)

This added paragraph seems out of character with the Prophet's statement as originally published in the *Times and Seasons:*

President Joseph Smith arose and . . . wholly removed suspicion from elder Sidney Rigdon . . . He expressed entire willingness to have elder Sidney Rigdon retain his station, provided he would magnify his office . . . but signified his lack of confidence in his integrity and steadfastness, judging from their past intercourse.

Perhaps we arrive at understanding when we realize that even though the added paragraph is out of character with the Prophet's original statement as published in the *Times and Seasons*, yet it is completely in keeping with the edited account of the Prophet's statement which was finally published in the *History of the Church*, and which no doubt, B. H. Roberts presumed was accurate.

Considering all the circumstances, it is not at all unlikely that the Prophet would make such a statement, but probably not before the Conference after he had just agreed to give Rigdon another chance. In all fairness, however, we do well to remember that the minutes were not a stenographic account of what was said at the conference.

On the other hand, it is significant that the Prophet chose Rigdon as his running mate for Vice President in the presidential election, and that in this capacity he was brought into the Council of Fifty and finally on May 11th, into the Holy Order, when he received his Endowment. At the General Conference of the Church held in April, Rigdon spoke valiantly in defense of the Prophet. Not only so, but at the same Conference, the Prophet also spoke kindly of Rigdon: "I rejoice in hearing the testimony of my aged friend" the Prophet said in his now famous King Follett sermon. ("The King Follett Discourse Given By The Prophet Joseph Smith — A New Amalgamation and Doctrinal Commentary", to be published in a forthcoming issue of *Doctrine of the Priesthood*)

Yet all this notwithstanding, this in itself does not go to say that the Prophet had sufficient confidence in Rigdon to appoint him as his successor. The Prophet was willing to forgive, but that does not mean that he had confidence in Rigdon's stability, when without proper guidance coming from those higher in the Priesthood. Rigdon's willingness to cater to Emma and to play both ends against the middle after the Prophet's death would prove that the Prophet's judgment was correct. As it is stated in the published minutes of the October 1843 conference, the Prophet "expressed entire willingness to have elder Sidney Rigdon retain his station, provided he would magnify his office, and walk and conduct himself in all honesty, righteousness, and integrity; but signified

his lack of confidence in his integrity and steadfastness, judging from their past intercourse."

Appendix B

The following statement is an extract from a pamphlet which was written by Jedediah M. Grant, and published in Philadelphia, in 1844:

"Last Spring, Elder W. W. Phelps, prevailed on Elder Rigdon, to go with him and attend the councils of Elder J. Smith, he went, and after listening to the instructions and viewing the order of the council, and the manifestations of the power of God through Elder J. Smith, he leaped for joy, and walked the room as sprightly as a boy in his gayest frolics. Exclaiming, "Joseph! Joseph! Thou servant of the most High God, I will never leave nor forsake thee, for mine eyes now see what Kings and Prophets desired to see and hear. But they fell asleep to rest in hope of what mine ears hear and mine eyes see. Brother Joseph you have tried to shake me off for several years, but you cannot do it, I will hold on to the skirts of your garment, I am now determined never to let you go." His visits to the councils revived him up so much, that he spoke at the April Conference, several times, with considerable spirit and energy." (*J. M. Grant's Rigdon, Number One, A Collection of Facts Relative to the Course Taken by Elder Sidney Rigdon, in the States of Ohio, Missouri, Illinois and Pennsylvania*, by Jedediah M. Grant, one of the Quorum of Seventies. p. 16)

The following remarks were made by Apostle Orson Hyde before the High Priests Quorum, in Nauvoo, on April 27th, 1845:

"In the month of March, 1844, Mr. Rigdon appeared in council, and Joseph Smith was present. It was in the upper room in the brick building situated in Water-street, commonly known as Joseph's Store. Mr. Rigdon there received an explanation of many important matters connected with the kingdom of God: after which, he began to speak, then to shout, then to dance, and threw his feet so high that he lost his balance, and came well nigh falling over backwards

upon the stove. His language was something like the following: — "Glory to God and the Lamb! Hallelujah to Jesus! that mine eyes have seen this day; and thanks to my brethren that I have been permitted to enter here; for I perceive that God is here with you in power and glory!" He expressed to me at his own house, but a day or two after, his entire satisfaction with Joseph as a man of God, and also his approbation of the course of the church and council. He was so extravagant in his shoutings in that council, that most of the members hung their heads. I also thought to myself that he shouted too loud to shout long. When a tune reaches the highest notes it very soon turns. (*Speech of Elder Orson Hyde, Delivered before the High Priests' Quorum, in Nauvoo, April 27th, 1845, Upon the Course and Conduct of Mr. Sydney Rigdon, and Upon the Merits of His Claims to the Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, printed in Liverpool, 1845, pp. 8–9)

Appendix C

The following is an extract of a new amalgamated text of a Discourse given by President Young at the General Conference of the Church held on the 6th of April 1848. The original reports were made by Thomas Bullock and Wilford Woodruff.

What is significant in what follows is President Young's consistent acknowledgement of the rights of the Prophet's children to succession.

"At our conference last winter something was said about the re-organization of the Church — a first Presidency and a Patriarch was selected, and Father John Smith was acknowledged Patriarch to the whole Church. It was a clear vote; we should sustain him; he has not received his ordination, but we can acknowledge him in the right thereof. This is a matter that has not been discussed before the people.

Resolved that we sustain Father John Smith as the Patriarch over the whole church. President Young made some remarks concerning appointing the first Presidency. Perhaps there are some who feel that *the rising generation* ***will be robbed*** *in reorganizing the Church*, that

it would limit their privileges, and some have thought we were not able to do it, but take the Church here and abroad and *the minds of the people generally are ripe for the subject*, tho' there may be a few who do not see the necessity. If any have feelings that *the* ***rising generation will be deprived of their rights*** *or curtailed in their privileges*, I beg of such to dismiss their fears. The Lord God Omnipotent has reared up this kingdom thus far, and overruled and controlled all things to its advancement on the earth, and [He] will sustain it until all things are consummated and the Church becomes triumphant. If He does not lead and dictate the affairs of the people, I would like the man on the walls of Jerusalem, after crying wo to the city 7 years and now he said: wo to myself". I say wo to the Church: Wo to myself. It is for the people to live so that they can discern between the good and the evil, between the spirit of the Lord and opposite spirits, and if they do not, it is their privilege to humble themselves and to know that God is with us and for us, and not have to ask other people, or give heed to what this or that man may say. So, Brethren, you may dismiss all your fears pertaining to the organization of the Church. The spirit of the Lord had been with us and we know what is right. *It is our right and privilege, and was at the first conference after Joseph's death, to reorganize the Church, but we were not obliged to do it.* ***It was not wisdom to do it then***. I'll tell you how I felt, and how I feel now. To all apostates, I say: Go it and all hell go it; we can whip you; Yes, with one hand tied behind our backs. I told the boys: Come home, build up the Temple. Let uncle Sidney alone, and let him go it, and gather what he can. Go it; what can you do? Pretty soon James J. Strang stretches out his neck, and I said to Strang: Go it; Strangle away and see what you can do. I did not want to say anything about them, but let them alone. If men don't know the things of God from the things of men, let them go. They are occupying seats that don't belong to them; they ain't worth their room. I want every apostate to go, every man and woman that can't put his neck right to it and bear up with patience. Go, I say, as I said going to the mountains, if you don't do righteously, I'll withdraw from the camp. I would rather go into the wilderness with 6 men, than a host who won't act right and be overthrown. I said to Sidney and Strang: Go it; draw out all the filth you can. We have now whipped all of our enemies with

one hand tied behind us and now it is time to organize the church. I'll tell you what it takes to make an honest man; it takes a man to be honest and upright from this time till he goes to judgment. You won't catch an honest man becoming a dishonest man, and I don't know that Scriptures that say: My sheep hear my voice, but they don't know it. I want you to produce such Scripture, if you can. It must be in Sidney's or Strang's Bible, and for me to say a righteous good man has been deceived by such characters, I don't believe it; they are naturally dishonest in their feelings and sloppering in their deal; if they had been honest, they would have stuck by us, (even if the shepherd was dead) and kept by the fold and fought the Devils. An honest man would not be dishonest neither would they follow such men as Rigdon and Strange. The Bible I read, the Bible we get from the Christians, and the Latter-day Saints Bible, all say that the sheep hear the voice of the good shepherd, and a stranger's voice they will not follow. The sheep would follow such [men] as God sent even the Shepherds while dishonest men would follow the wolves. And where are the apostates now; it is rumored that Sidney had to swear to his son-in-law, Geo. W. Robinson, that he would never open his mouth about religion again, before he would take him in and give him a morsel of bread. I would have been killed a thousand time[s] in Carthage Jail rather than deny my religion, or swear any such thing. I would have told my son-in-law: I'll do as I please.

It is our privilege to re-organize, and if you do not know where the keys of this kingdom are, it is your privilege to repent and have revelations. Many repent and get so holy that they receive revelations to lead every body but themselves. They get so holy that they leak out all good sense like my stocking. They are so holy that I had to put on one white and one blue stocking. I had not time to wait to get them mended. Those remarks pertain to the organization of the Church. You know what has been said and what others have done. They have written letters saying it was this and that one to lead the Church, and ***this child they have robbed***. They don't know any thing about it; let them know ever so much, *they do not know enough to hold their tongues. If they had good sense,* ***they would know to hold their tongues***. The Lord will rule in his Kingdom. I know how it was and is and how it will be, and it will be as the Lord says. *Some*

suppose that by appointing a presidency it is ***robing some of the rising generation*** *or taking away some ones rights but* ***it is not so***, and when we get back to our places, we'll find it's all right. A great deal is said about covetousness; that is idolatry; to covet that which does not belong to you, whether about your families, your field, or in the Priesthood. Don't you see it here almost in everything you do, and some are handling things and others know not what they are. I am for the Lord, as I told my brethren. I am a friend to the Almighty, if I suffer persecution, the Lord will yet rule and overrule and sanctify it for my good and he will reign until he puts all his enemies under his feet, and then he will deliver up the kingdom to his father." (TPBY 2:4/6/48)

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT: What follows is the Wilford Woodruff report of the first day and a half of the General Conference of the Church, which was held on April 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th, 1844. Sidney Rigdon was the principal speaker during this time, and it is for this reason that it is included here.

The Clayton and Bullock reports of the Conference were amalgamated and began to appear serially in the *Times and Seasons*, commencing with the May 1st, 1844 issue, which was prior to the Prophet's death. However, before all of Rigdon's discourse was published, the Prophet was murdered, and the Succession problem between Rigdon and the Twelve developed, which resulted in the remainder of Rigdon's remarks at the Conference being deleted from the published account of the minutes.

"A Special Conference held at Nauvoo [on] April 6th A.D. 1844.

Conference assembled at 10 o'clock A.M. April 6. President B[righam] Young called the Conference to order. President Joseph Smith said He should not occupy time in speaking of any difficulties that might have occured in our midst. Said he was not a fallen prophet, and never in any nearer relationship to God than at the present time, and would show before the conferen[ce] closed that God was with him.

Prayer by W[illiam] W. Phelps, after which *Sidney Rigdon arose* and said it was with no ordinary feelings he arose to speak — a privilege which he had not before enjoyed in the same capacity for five years. And the circumstances of the occasion points out to me my text, which is "the Saints of the last Days". I remember in 1830 all the Church met in a log cabin, where we conversed extensively about laying the foundation of this Kingdom. Our minds expanded far and wide while contemplating this subject. Even in that day we talked as large then as now. We spoke of great things that the world could not bear and that is the reason why we were in secret. The world would laugh and consider us fools and even mob us because we talked about things that were true and have and will come to pass; yet [they were] things that looked impossible to them because they did not view them by faith as we do. And if we should still converse about things in secret, it would be upon the same principle, for we are not willing to bear the scoffs of the world any longer unnecessarily. Had we told openly and talked openly of the things of God that have and will come to pass our blood would have been shed. We should not have been here this day. But we hid ourselves up in secret. There we talked, wept, and prayed and the Angels administered unto us and the Spirit of God was with us and the heavens opened unto us. But we should now have been in our grave had we proclaimed unto the world what God showed unto us; notwithstanding it was for the benefit of man, and for his salvation, and not for evil.

The appearance of this congregation this day shows the fulfillment of the revelations of Jesus Christ given in those days. No incident has taken place in this day but what we spoke of at that early period. All those things were deeply impressed upon the mind by the God of Heaven. How could you be made to believe that you did not live in Nauvoo and have not got habitations? Neither could we disbelieve this to be the Church of God. We cannot disbelieve it for we see hear and feel. I have always known it to be. I cannot see otherwise. Have I not seen God's glory by the visions of Heaven? Yea, I have. Then what have we to do with the little difficulties on earth? Nothing.

Those were the beginning of good days — shut up in a little shop with nothing to eat but a little jonny cake and milk and water, only as we would occasionally shoot a squirrel and we lived in an old smokey house. Still we rejoiced in the things God was revealing unto us.

Many think it hard to live in Nauvoo but we counted those good days. God had given us great things. Don't think [it] strange if men don't think of great things. When I obtained a great and glorious principle I felt like locking it up, lest the people would laugh at me. And while we were together and telling one thing we would learn another; I speak of these things to do away with the notion or feelings about our secret meetings. Was there anything wrong then? No, neither will there be now. No, I have no fear of it. What God does is for my Salvation and the Salvation of man, and I say go ahead.

I have spoken of the grand principle of the beginning, and I have marvelled at one thing — i.e., after the foundation of the Church [was laid], men crept in that were very wise, [even] more so than God, [for they] professed to know more, some of them. It has kept the Church in a continual broil. It was so in the days of Moses but he disposed of them. He killed them or the Lord destroyed them.

I will leave this subject and show why Salvation belongs to the Priesthood of God and why it belongs to us as a people. Men labor under a mistake — i.e. [in their thinking they suppose that] Salvation is distinct from government. Salvation is always the result of government. Every man has a right to govern himself in a government. As every good is a part of the government and the laws are for the defence of a man. We see the need of laws in this city for there is evil [to] dispose of here. I have seen some trials in this city where some persons were tried for insulting the Marshall. But any other man is as good as the Marshall. Many other useful remarks were made by the speaker when he gave way until the afternoon.

[President Rigdon] was followed with many useful remarks from Elder Taylor. The stand was occupied with eleven Lamanites — chiefs, braves,and etc.

At 2 o'clock the conference assembled and [Sidney Rigdon] resumed his subject. Said we were discussing in the morning ser-

vice upon the history of the Church of Jesus Christ. Its a miserable man that could not manufacture his own text. I have known many a sermon spoiled by a bad text. The Church of Jesus Christ then. The heights of testimony and [the] amount of evidence that many of those have had that have fallen away has been of such a nature that when they say they don't believe this work to be true, they lie! The things that were done in secret in the beginning are now seen openly and there is nothing secret now but what all will know in time to come.

I am aware there is many things I did not hint at. I will speak of them now. I have seen the time when the Presidency of the Church sitting now before me, were locked up with me in secret places waiting upon God. We did not go out at all but to eat andc. But it was soon found out, and a mob came saying God damn you to hell, and threatened our lives. It was at this time [that] we sat for hours in the *Visions* of *heaven* around the throne of God and gazed upon the scenes of Eternity.

One evening a Mexican called upon us and he went out armed to see a dozen armed men in the corner of the fence. He wanted to shoot them. Afterwards the mob came in and broke the door, took me and dragged me out through the streets by my heels with my head pounding over the frozen ground. Another company took President Smith, and tar and feathered him. They tried to turn aquiphertos (sic) down our throats. This is the reason why we were in secret under lock and key.

Now if you will let us work openly we will not work in secret. We will work openly as much as you want. I think I have said enough already to show that the Church has come up through great tribulation. Let this suffice then upon this subject.

There is men standing in your midst who are not afraid of men or devils and men whose mouths cannot be stopped unless you take their lives. For they will speak in defence of the innocent of virtue and truth while they live.

Their is men in your midst who have learned there is a great God who can do as He pleases — [He can] take up the hills as a little

thing, and such men do not fear death. They know about Heaven. They have seen it and know all about it.

There is men in your midst which you must sustain or go to Hell. Save them and you save yourselves. Reject them and you go to Hell. We are 14 years of age now. Choose your guardian and when you get to be 21 then do business for yourselves. You can save yourselves or Damn yourselves.

You have just men among you and the reason is because God has taught them, chose and ordained them and this is the reason why they are so.

You have men in your midst who will not turn to the right hand or left. If you are in their path you must get out. You cannot court by favor or wealth or anything else. They do not ask politicians, kings or people for favor. They ask God for it alone. If the world make them rich or poor they never ask for it. The man whom God has raised up to lay the foundation of this work is placed in such a situation that he cannot fall and he is so lovely that I cannot get mad at him.

This is an important part in the history of the Church. The cry of some is I shall not get office if these men are not put down. Well God intended to keep them fearing. When God sets up His Kingdom He will sustain it above all laws and kingdoms of the world and the world has no power over the Kingdom of God. The laws will be so strict that the world will make to try to catch the Saints that it will hang themselves by the wholesale. We want to build up the Laws of God in Hancock Co. I don't care anything about all the laws in the world, for I will live above them. God teaches His servants to respects kings, Gov[ernors], Presidents, and men in authority. But I have a right to proclaim myself a ***King*** *and* ***Priest*** *unto the* ***Most High God***. Yet I will not transgress your laws. But don't do as they did in Missouri [and] kill people because they would not break the law.

I don't want any office in this government, for I am determined to be a **King** in the **Kingdom of God**. What be King in Heaven and quarrel about the office of constable on Earth?

The Kingdom of God may rise up in the midst of the kingdoms of the world and live above all laws, and not be a law abiding an. I will live above all law. I will pay my taxes and obey all requirements that the government has upon me. The reason we was mobbed [in] Missouri was because we would not have anything to do with the laws. We did not break any. We lived above them so they sent a mob upon us. The Kingdom of God to the world would be a Light in a Dark place. The Kingdom of God could be set up in any kingdom or country and not break the law but live above it. Conference Adjourned till tomorrow morning.

April 7th Sunday. The sun pleasant air calm and serene and a vast multitude of about twenty thousand souls assembled together. After singing and prayers *President Rigdon arose* and said, our borders are enlarged this morning. I shall preach from the same text we preached from yesterday — "The Church of Jesus Christ, the Kingdom of God, and leaven, the little stone spoken of by Daniel andc." The testimony given would let the Kingdom of God exist in any government Monarchial or Republican. We intend to show why salvation belongs to this Church only.

The Kingdom of God is a government that exercising its only power in every respect — it holds a place on the mind, not by force of arms but by free will, because they want to do the will of God; and it is accomplished by truth itself that is manifest from Heaven by intelligence that he sees in Heaven and it is power in itself. It is on this principle that power rests. The Lord begins to teach a man what he can do and if he never would know what he was taught, he never would know what he could do. No people can comprehend it but the Church of God. Then one of the main things in the Kingdom of God is to let a man know what to do, what glory kingdom and power he can gain. Man is taught a principle [so] that when it enters the mind it has a power over death, plagues, sickness. The gift of miracles, this is one great evidence of the work the power of God. This then is the Kingdom of God.

All religions then that there is in the world that has not these things, has a tendency to do hurt instead of doing good, for it teaches

those things are done away. God has said He would take all the kingdoms of the world out of the way — He would break in pieces and subdue and He would teach the kings and all powers the way that they may have a chance.

We say then, there is no power anywhere else unto Salvation. Isaiah said the wilderness should blossom as the rose, the lame leap, the blind see. We have got this power here, yet the world says it is an imposition. When He comes, He will save you. The lame shall leap, Deaf hear Blind see. He will come, so you need not have sickness or lameness. But man has proclaimed Salvation in the Earth. When we exercise the Keys of the Kingdom of God, who can oppose it? Not war with the sword, but with another power. The world has always been shedding blood. I proclaim peace not war, and this is what he calls the Kingdom. Has not the Kingdom of God a right to extend in any part of the world to do good, beat swords into plow shares and spears into pruning hooks, and it shall be a Kingdom of Glory, Peace, and Salvation.

Let no man be alarmed because the Lord said that the Kingdom of God should swallow up all other kingdoms. What harm would it do? For all the world would have the same spirit. The Lord said He intended to do by the whole world the same as He has done by us, and this is the thing the world is afraid of. Reflect then. This is as far as I intended to go upon this subject.

A word then upon the materials to carry on this Kingdom. Any man publicans, sinners, scoundrels or anybody else, could repent and receive the gospel and become a member of the Kingdom as well as the good. For when Jesus came he came to call sinners, and Harlots came into the Kingdom. It don't require much of an exertion of the mind.

Much depends however upon the decision of the mind. It depends upon one action of the mind. A man remarked to me he did not belong to a church. [He said he] was not worthy. But this is a mistake. Jesus Christ came to save sinners. He saves the unworthy. The Lord will offer a man Salvation. He says he is not worth[y]. But what would you want your son to do if he was unworthy? He should return to

his father. So with God. He calls to the world to return by baptism. He cannot make himself any better but decide with the mind today. Then the Lord begins to teach him the things of God and heaven and I will make you like myself. I will give you my spirit and make you feel like my family, and this is the pivot to a God. Then decide and go [and] be Baptized. Then you will be in the way of Salvation. If he decide otherwise he will not be any better.

A word upon the Spirit. This noble decision of the mind causes Angels to rejoice in the Heavens for there is more joy over the sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons. Every person can do this and no man can do a better work. Let no man say they are unworthy.

I wish all the teachers of the day could hear me. I was a Baptist and preached their doctrine and was hampered, and hampered others in my teachings and all the teachers of the day do the same. They may be honest but they teach false doctrine. They call people to the anxious bench and keep them down until they will say they are willing to be damned. But I never was willing to be damned.

The doctrine Peter taught was different from sectarianisms. His doctrine was repent and be Baptized and you shall receive the Holy Ghost. Take a view of this subject. Look at the spirit of promise. View the congregation on that day. They were stranger[s] not having a knowledge of Salvation. They were strangers to the power of God and did not know that Jesus Christ was crucified and all they knew about it was what Peter told them on the day of Pentecost, 14 verse of 2 ch. of Acts. The only knowledge they had about the Holy Spirit was what Peter taught them by quoting the prophet Joel 37 verse.

Now mark this. Peter had defined the spirit of God of the fruits of it be Prophecy, dreams, visions, revelations, andc. Yes this is the spirit of God the spirit of Prophecy, dreams, visions, heal the sick, and all the great things, and I will in the last days pour out my spirit upon all flesh. This is the definition of the Spirit. All were called to be baptized without any exceptions, villains, Harlots, scoundrel[s], and all.

A question. How long would it take the sectarian religion before they would prophecy and have the gifts of the spirits of God? It would take seven eternities to do it for it is on a different scheme. I will come to an anxious bench and get as good a conversion as can be got at an anxious bench. Will I be converted to God? No I will be converted to an anxious bench.

If I had been converted to God I should have been Prophesying according to the words of Joel. For he said the spirit of God should be poured out upon all flesh and I believe I am flesh and I believe you are flesh and I believe we are in the last days.

I will now sum up the testimony. What is a man to preach when they go out? Tell the people to repent quit their iniquity be Baptized and you shall receive the Holy Ghost, dream dreams, see visions,